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AUTHOR Huff, Sheila M.
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ABSTRACT

Those who wish to relate education and assessment to the realities of practice in human services sometimes turn to the field for information about the nature of jobs. To determine competencies in counseling and human service agencies, an instrument was developed to survey attitudes of 502 human service providers and 51 clients from 24 agencies. Five dimensions or factors of competence in human service work were indicated: (1) developing helping relationships; (2) conformity to minimum work standards; (3) technical and administrative knowledge; (4) diagnostic and problem solving ability; and (5) human resource development skills. Factors 1 and 4 were judged to be critical in preventing client harm, and factors 4 and 5 were considered typical of superior performance. The findings have implications for program improvement, student assessment, and resource pooling as well as licensing, certification, and Civil Service applications. (JAC)

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Competence in Counseling and Helping Roles in Human Service Agencies

Prepared by:
Sheila M. Huff

Submitted by:

National Center for the Study of Professions
1527 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

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SURVEY PROCEDURES

Agency Sample Selection

Since we sought to learn whether there were commonalities and differences across services and roles, we attempted to maximize differences in types of service, size of agency and whether agencies were public or private. Our primary resource document for locating agencies was the Community Services Directory produced by the Volunteer Center, Inc., Syracuse and Onondaga County. This document describes 450 local human service agencies. Ultimately, 24 of the 27 agencies selected participated in the survey.

Gaining Agency Cooperation

Gaining agency cooperation was the most difficult and time consuming task of the project. Since such projects succeed or fail on the willingness of agency administrators to cooperate, we spent time analyzing our success.

We began the project with "cold calls" to agency directors in the case of small agencies and to training directors or heads of departments of interest to us in the large public agencies. We briefly explained the nature of the project and asked for an appointment to present the study in greater detail. An initial presentation was made in each agency. Written materials were handed out containing the following kind of information, covered in our initial presentation:

- o description of NCSP and its mission
- o resumes of the research team
- o nature of the research questions
- o what we needed from the agency--what "participation" involved
- o what kind of time and effort was needed on the part of agency staff
- o our schedule and statement of willingness to be flexible and work around staff schedules in the agencies
- o value of the project generally and benefits for participating agencies
- o who the audiences for the report would be
- o kinds of agency staff we wished to involve
- o nature of confidentiality; safeguards to be taken

At the close of initial presentations, signatures were requested on a pledge to participate, which pledges had to be delivered to our sponsor before funding of the project could commence. Twenty-one of the agencies signed these pledges. In the case of the large agencies, they were signed by lower ranking officials whom we had selected as our liaisons and they contained notations that final approval was contingent upon approval by the agency director or, in the case of Hutchings Psychiatric Center, approval of its Institutional Review Committee. Hutchings clearance required preparation of two highly specific reports and two formal meetings with the Review Committee.

Lower ranking officials who served as our liaisons in the large agencies were especially helpful in suggesting ways for us to gain the cooperation of their agencies' leadership. For the public agencies, it was suggested that we enlist the support of the Administrator for Human Services of the County executive's office. This accomplished, he advised us to make a formal introductory presentation at one of the regularly scheduled Human Services Cabinet meetings. We succeeded in gaining the interest of county commissioners and other top officials in the study. We then arranged special individual meetings with key agency directors and called to their attention people in their agencies that supported participation in the project.

For the small agencies in the sample, gaining access was direct and simpler. All that was necessary to get an appointment was to generate sufficient interest through initial correspondence and a telephone conversation.

The major concern of agency directors was that the project's findings be made intelligible and useful to their personnel. We had to overcome a great deal of hesitancy due to bad experiences some of the large agencies had had with studies that had consumed a great deal of staff time and had provided no useful feedback. We promised notification of the availability of the final report and individual agency feedback reports. Agency personnel and directos also mentioned that there had been some breeches of confidentiality in the past. The incidents had seriously damaged morale in one of the large public agencies. This was them most difficult obstacle we had to overcome in persuading one of the large agencies to participate. Also, for all our efforts to be reassuring, only a handful of the agency's staff responded to our survey.

The major selling point for the project for the public agencies was its potential to, in their words, "bring about some much needed change in the civil service system." All cooperating agencies saw its potential usefulness in improving selection and training capability.

Since there was a long period of time between our initial contacts and the administration of our survey, we sent out two mailings

informing agency directors and contacts of our progress and when they could expect to hear from us. These communications succeeded in maintaining interest in the project.

Job Elements Workshops

The first step in our process of discovering what providers and recipients of social services perceive as important elements of competence in human service work was a series of three "job elements" workshops. The twenty-three agencies participating in the project at that time were recontacted. Their memories of the goals of the project were refreshed, and they were asked to select a professional and a paraprofessional who they considered outstanding at their job and analytic enough to be able to articulate what worker characteristics were involved in competent performance. We asked that only people who worked directly with clients be selected. To assure the level of participation required to make these workshops meaningful and fairly representative of a broad range of social services and agencies, we held the sessions on a Saturday and paid participants a $25 honorarium.

A. Workshop for Paraprofessionals

The distinction between the workshops with the professionals and paraprofessionals is not clear-cut. In several agencies, there were positions that could be labelled "paraprofessional"; for example, therapy aides and paralegals. In other agencies, particularly small private ones, no distinction is made between professionals and paraprofessionals. In those agencies where the distinction could not be made, the agencies were asked to send a more experienced and senior representative to the workshop for professionals and a less experienced, junior representative to the workshop for paraprofessionals. We intentionally kept the experienced professionals in a separate group so that people with lower status jobs would feel more at ease to express their opinions. This approach worked well. However, we erred in judgment on our written invitation, calling the second session

"paraprofessional workshop." Some of the participants registered their annoyance at this and advised us to please not call anyone a "paraprofessional," since it made it sound as though their jobs were of lesser importance than other' in the agency.

The ten participants from nine agencies in the paraprofessional workshop included three aids of various types and one each public health assistant, program coordinator, out-reach worker, caseworker, social worker, teen coordinator and community relations specialist. Seven of the participants worked full time, and two worked part time. Four of the participants had associates degrees, three had bachelors degrees, and two had high school diplomas. Their academic background included three majors in education, one in social work, one in human development and one in music therapy. They had worked an average of 3.5 years in their field, an average of 3.3 years with their present employer and an average of 2.9 years in their present jobs.

B. Workshop for Professionals

The workshop for professionals included 20 representatives from 15 agencies. Among them were five program area directors, three social workers, three caseworkers, two executive directors, two attorneys and one each program administrator, counselor, welfare examiner, assistant agency director and client advocate. All worked with clients, and the majority worked primarily with clients. All but two of the participants worked full time. Nine of the professionals had a bachelors degree, nine had a masters degree, two had J.D. degrees and one had a Ph.D. The educational background of the senior professionals indicated a wide range of disciplines taken as majors in their academic careers. Six had majored in social work, five in psychology, two in sociology, and one each in the areas of chemistry, history, education, drama, nursing and public administration. The professionals had worked in their field for an average of 6.2 years, had been with their present employer for an average of 3.4 years and had been in their present job an average of 2.9 years.

C. Client Workshop

For the client workshop, we wished to achieve a good ethnic mix, a mix of men and women and people who had had contact with several agencies in our sample. Working through community contacts, we located a group of five client representatives and one translator who met our criteria. Our most important community contact was with the Director of the Spanish Action League of Syracuse. He located two clients for us who had experience with several of the agencies in our sample. He assured them that we could be trusted and arranged to have a Spanish speaking translator accompany them to the workshop. We were informed that without such community support, we would probably not have been able to include Hispanic Americans because of our likely inability to readily establish a trust relationship.

The group of client representatives was racially mixed and included two Spanish speaking clients. There were three women and two men. The translator was a woman. All the participants had families and low incomes. Of the twenty-three agencies taking part in the study at that time, the participants in the workshop had had personal experience with an average of eleven of the agencies.

D. Procedures for Workshops

In both the professional and paraprofessional workshops, we began with a short exercise. We asked: "What does a garage attendant do?" Answers included such tasks as pumping gas, making change and repairing tirres. We then explained that we wanted to know was what the characteristics of the garage attendant were that explained his or her ability to do those jobs well. This elicited examples such as "willingness to work outdoors in miserable weather," "courtesy," and "basic arithmetic ability." We then turned our attention to client-centered human service roles. Suggestions were recorded on flip charts. The sessions lasted between 2 1/2 and 3 hours and were very lively.

The client workshop was held in a storefront community meeting room on a bus route, at the suggestion of participants. It was less highly structured than the other two workshops, and instead of flip charts, we

used a tape recorder and took notes. Examples of kinds of things human service workers do were given, and we explained that instead of tasks, we wanted to know what qualities of human service workers enabled them to be effective in helping clients. For the most part, it wasout of heated discussions of bad experiences that we were able to draw out their ideas of positive qualities that would prevent such occurrences. Some characteristics of "competent agencies" were also suggested along with characteristics of human service workers. These included accessibility by public transportation, out-reach, good record keeping systems, having people on staff who could translate for Hispanic clients, and taking steps to assure that staff learn about neighborhoods, ethnic norms and values of major client groups servied, and what it is like to be poor. One unpleasant note came at the close of the session when one of the clients said that poor people had been saying the same kinds of things to researchers and agency staff for more than twenty years, and that no-one ever listened. We pointed out that we must all be cockeyed optimists, then, since we certainly had talked a lot in two hours.

E. Items Generated in Their Origins

Through all the iterations of the items generated in the three workshops, we kept track of their origins. The final survey instrument contained 120 items. Items and their origins are reported in Chapter 3, Section 1.

F. Comparative Methods Note

As noted earlier, the job elements approach developed by Ernest Primoff is used extensively throughout the civil service system. We selected this approach because it focuses on worker characteristics as opposed to job content through task analysis. In the study involving social work entry level classifications conducted by the U.S. Civil Service Commission, our approach can be contracted with theirs in the following ways:

- The Civil Service team had to depend on liason people to explain the project to agencies and criteria for selecting participants. They reported being dismayed that participants sometimes did not meet the criteria, and they attributed the problem to a communications breakdown. By contrast, we were able to spend considerable time with agency personnel explaining the project prior to asking them to select participants. We also contacted them specifically to discuss who would participate. As a result, participants met our criteria of being outstanding in their roles, having direct contact with clients in a helping or counseling capacity, and being sufficiently analytic and articulate to contribute to an understanding of competence in their roles.

- The Civil Service team explored only entry level qualities for social workers. We centered attention on helping or counseling clients, regardless of hierarchical status of a job, and we cut across a much broader range of human service jobs in both the public and private sector.

- Clients were included in generating the elements of our study; whereas the Civil Service team did not invovle clients.

- Our panels were larger than theirs.

- The Civil Service team compared commonalities of elements and subelements across jurisdictions. We ultimately compared commonalities and differences across several independent variables, but not geographical jurisdictions.

- The Civil Service team did not devote special effort to phrasing of the items. We invested considerable time in t his task.

- The Civil Service team's workshops culminated in test development. Ours were merely to establish elements of competance to be rated later by a much larger and broader sample of judges.

- The Civil Service team did not use statistical techniques to establish elements and subelements but, rather, an informal judgment process. As a result of their approach, elements in one jurisdiction showed up as subelements in another. Later in our project, through a survey and factor analysis, we developed elements or dimensions which have more potential stability.

From this point on in the project, we began to rely, for advice, on the experience of George Klemp, Director of Research for McBer and Company, Inc. Klemp had had considerable experience in employing the job elements and factor analysis approach as a first stage in identifying competencies in a wide variety of jobs.

Questionnaire Construction

A. Items

Two hundred seventy-one (271) items were generated in the three job elements workshops for professionals, paraprofessionals and clients. The list went through the following eight iterations before it was finalized into the list of 120 items contained in the survey instrument:

First Iteration:

Two hundred seventy-one (271) job elements were generated at the workshops. Professionals contributed 126 elements; paraprofessionals contributed 89 elements, and clients contributed 56 elements.

Second Iteration:

The 271 elements from the first iteration wer copied verbatim onto strips of paper and clustered according to similarity of concepts. This was done to ease locating items or comparisons.

Third Iteration:

Items were compared, and redundancies were eliminated. Statements most closely capturing the meaning and spirit of the workshop statements were selected. The items were reduced to 115 in number.

Fourth Iteration:

Items were submitted to Paul Pottinger for suggestions on language revision and comprehensiveness. Language was revised for some ofthe 115 items.

Fifth Iteration:

All of the elements and subelements from the Spivey and Goulding study in Maryland, North Caroline, Colorado, Massachusetts and Kansas City were carded. The total number of elements per panel was as follows:

Maryland	181
Massachusetts	150
Utah	162
Colorado	131
North Carolina	97
Kansas City	165
	886 total

Our items were then compared with Spivey and Goulding's to determine if there were any that were essentially different from ours that should be included and also to change our wording where their's seemed better in terms of capturing the meanings intended by our workshop participants. Three items from the Spivey and Goulding study were added to our list.

Sixth Iteration:

The items wer then submitted to George Klemp of McBer and Company for comment and suggestions. Two items were added to our list at Klemp's suggestion, and further language revisions were made.

Seventh Iteration:

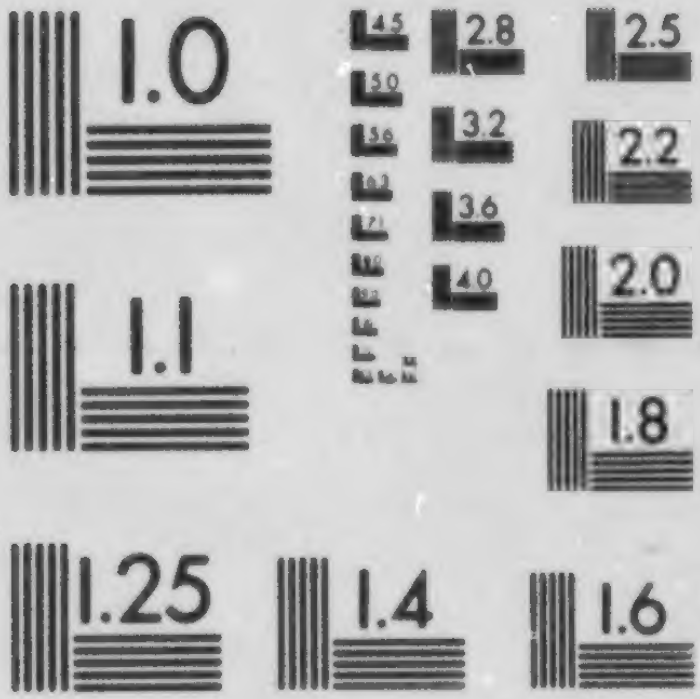
The late Dr. Ronald McDonald ofthe Hutchings Psychiatric Center's Research Department reviewed the list, primarily for clarity and readability. A few language revisions were made at his suggestion.

Eigth Iteration:

Final revisions to the phrasing of the items were made on the basis of our field tests of the entire questionnaire. Our final list contained 120 items.

B. Response Categories

For each item, we asked respondents to make three judgments. First, was the item relevant to their role? Second, if a human service worker lacked this attribute, was harm to clients likely to result? Third, was the attribute characteristic of average



MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS
STANDARD REFERENCE MATERIAL 1010a
(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)

performers or only of superior performers (forced choice)? Appendix B containes the questionnaire sent to human service providers.

While other analysts have used "trouble likely" as part of the measure of importance of a particular attribute, leaving kind of trouble vague, we chose instead to narrow this concept to harm likely and to focus clearly on harm to clients. We did so because we were focusing only on client-centered roles in our analysis. Also, we judged that such items (as opposed to trouble for the agency or the human service worker or other possible interpretations) could be an important anchor for decisions about which characteristics were most important to screen in or out in selection procedures.

C. Perspective

We were tapping the perspectives of administrators, supervisors and counselors about roles that involved direct contact with clients in a counseling or helping capacity. We called the latter roles "on-line" positions. We asked "on-line" people to respond to he questionnaire from the perspective of their own role, and we asked others to pick an on-line role in their agency or the combination of on-line roles and answer the questionnaire from that perspective. In retrospect, we regret not having asked respondents who were not taking the perspective of their own role to name the role or roles they had in mind in answering the questionnaire. This is not critical to our study, since we sought to define generic abilities that cut across roles. But such specificity might have been helpful for further analyses of our data and other comparative studies.

D. Fatigue Factor Control

To control for fatigue factor, for half the survey instruments, we reversed the order of the items. We also asked for background information last.

E. Background and Supplemental Information

The background and supplemental information we requested (see Appendix B) was based primarily upon hypotheses about what independent variables might be important in examining agreements and disagreements. We collected slightly more information than we were ultimately prepared to use in our analyses. However, the data tape and (uncoded) raw data files will be available to other researchers who may have an interest in the additional data.

F. Nominations

We attached a separate nominations sheet to the questionnaires and an uncoded envelope for its return (see Appendix B). We asked human service providers to identify outstanding human service workers, highly effective in working with clients, whose work they had ample opportunity to observe. We sought the nominations primarily to compare the judgments of those nominated with the judgments of those not nominated. On request, we gave lists of nominated individuals to two of the agencies' education and training directors who wished to use this information as a basis for assembling teams for staff development purposes.

G. Format

We chose to justapose responses to items and questions rather than using a separate scoring sheet. This made coding slightly more difficult and increased expenditurers on postage. However, it minimized error for respondents and increased ease in responding.

H. Field Test Procedures

For Phase I of the field test, we located five seventh graders whose reading scores on standardized tests showed them to be reading at the eighth grade level. To make the exercise meaningful to them, we systematically changed the wording of the questionnaire as follows:

- For "agencies," we substituted "schools"
- For "human service workers," we substituted "teacher"
- For "client" we substituted "student"

On the day of the scheduled field test, four of the five children had the flu. To meet our deadlines, we tested the instrument with the one well child. She was asked to question us if anything was not clear. We reviewed each of her answers. For those answers which seemed surprising, we asked her to provide her rationale so we could determine whether she had comprehended the meaning intended. As a result of her comments, several minor adjustments in wording were made. It should be noted that the child had no problem making fine disciminations with the teaching role and schools in mind. This suggests the contribution children might make to understanding the anatomy of "harm" in classrooms and what distinguishes outstanding from average teachers.

For Phase II of the field test, we asked the core staff of Literacy Volunteers of America, whose headquarters is in Syracuse, to complete the questionnaire and provide critical comments. A few minor adjustments were made at their request.

Site Selection

We chose Onondaga County, since the Syracuse area is representative of socio-economic conditions to be found nationwide. To the degree that these conditions affect agencies, work force and client populations, we took this to be an important consideration. The Syracuse area is large enough to support a large variety of social service agencies and, at the same time, it is sufficiently geographically separated from other population centers that social services are not subsumed by larger neighbors. Syracuse is often used for marketing research for this reason and because it possesses very representative economic characteristics (industrial mix, income distribution, etc.) and population characteristics (racial and ethnic composition, etc.).

Survey Sample Selection: Human Service Providers

Lists of employees, job titles, and work site addresses were collected from each of the 24 agencies participating in our survey. For each agency, we determined which positions involved direct contact with clients in a counseling or helping capacity; which positions were supervisory for the client-centered roles, and which of the administrative positions were key in terms of decisions affecting selection or staff utilization. We then distributed our survey in 24 agencies to the 1395 human service provides identified in this manner with the following exceptions:

- One agency would agree only to identify those of their staff they judged would be at ease answering our questionnaire.
- In one agency, the department head asked for volunteers, and we were allowed to send the survey instrument to only those individuals. (This agency's administration was acting very cautiously due to unethical behavior of a researcher some years ago.)

Survey Administration: Human Service Providers

Our initial plan for administering the questionnaire was to mail it to people's homes. However, several agencies would not release home addresses. Ultimately, after exploring other less expensive possibilities, we delivered the questionnaires with cover letters to people's work site addresses. A stamped, self-addressed envelope was enclosed for returning the questionnaires. We also included a nominations form and self-addressed stamped evelope for returning that separately. We sent the follow-up notice contained in Appendix B which brought 152 additional responses. All respondents received the thank you letter contained in Appendix B.

9. Client Survey

The client survey instrument contained the same items and response categories as that sent to the human service providers. The same cover pages were used for both surveys. Clients were asked to take the perspective of service users and think about human service providers who worked directly with clients in a counseling or helping capacity. The amount of background information requested of service users was minimal:

age, sex, ethnic background, marital status and number of children. They were also asked, on the first two pages of their survey, to check the agencies in our sample with which they had had contact, and whether they had participated in at least three counseling or helping sessions.

Locating clients to respond to our questionnaire was very time consuming, sand we made several falst starts. At first we had thought we could work through participating agencies, asking them to post sign-up sheets for volunteers. Some agencies were reluctant to do this. Moreover, the logistics of coordination were prohibitive. Also, clients names would appear in a public place. We then attempted to locate community peo le who would be willing to locate clients and administer the questionnaire. After two weeks and turn downs, we then went to Cornell Univeristy to seek the assistance of the Family Matters project team (Bronfenbrenner and Cochran, Project Directors). The team was working with families in the Syracuse area. They suggested that we engage the services of one of their Syracuse staff who had been instrumental in lining up their sample. They also suggested that we could hire some of their part-time field staff for canvasing and questionnaire administration.

The costs and time of employing this method would have exceeded our budged limitations. Instead, Mary Maples of the Family Matters staff in Syracuse suggested that we work through nieghborhood agencies who regularly brought clients together for classes and meetings. We decided this was the most promising way of proceeding, so Mary Maples volunteered to establish initial contact for us in the following programs:

Syracuse Girls Club
Headstart
Huntington Family Center
Vincent House
Brighton Family Center
T-House

We then hired another Family Matters former staff member, Betty Rankin, to review with our liaisons in these programs, the written document we prepared for them on our organization, staff, project and questionnaire. We then asked that clients be selected on the following basis:

- o contact with at least one of the large agencies in our sample or two of the smaller agencies
- o they had been through an intake process and had participated in at least three helping sessions on their own behalf or with a relative or close friend

Whether or not prospective respondents could meet these precise criteria acould not oe established in advance. Instead, our liaisons in the programs invited participation of people they were reasonably certain could meet our criteria.

All of the service users who responsed to our survey were from neighborhoods with a high instance of poverty. We attempted to cooperate with two programs whose client population was middle class, but were unsuccessful because those programs were closing for the summer.

The questionnaires were administered to clients in group sessions. Charts were prepared to explain this project. Participants were told there would be a $3.00 honorarium for helping us. Eligibility was then established using the first two pages of the client questionnarie. In several cases, clients did not fully meet our criteria. Some had had contact with only one of our smaller agencies. Rather than reject people who arrived for the sessions, we decided to have them participate, pay them the $3.00 and later review their booklets to decide if they were usuable. The first few questions were done aloud in a group until people felt at ease, then they proceeded on their own unless they had questions. Only one person asked to have the questionnaire orally administered. It should also be noted that several of the clients had had contact with agencies other than those in our sample. A careful review of the booklets and criteria led us to set aside eight, leaving us with 51 for analysis. Although we had hoped to include 100 clients, we ceased further efforts at that point because of budget and time constraints.

We highly recommend the approach we ultimately used. Had we employed it earlier, we could have involved many more clients. It should be noted that programs where there is some social stigma attached to receiving the service cannot reasonably be expected to cooperate, whereas smaller neighborhood centers can, especially if participants will have a chance to earn a few dollars and have their opinions taken seriously. Also, if the small cooperating programs are not participating in the larger study, no one worries that they might be evaluated and are thus more likely to cooperate.

10. Coding and Factor Analysis

The 502 questionnaires were collected and coded. For each item in the questionnaire, a one (1) or a zero (0) was coded for each of the three ratings. A (1) indicated that the respondent had circled the letter representing the category. A (0) indicated that the respondent had left the category blank. Thus, for each respondent, three numbers were coded. One for each of the three categories, superior, average, and harm likely. These initial ratings were used to generate the respondent's score for the item, which score was then used in the factor analysis. The formulas used to generate the respondent's scores were the following:

Function A: (2 x superior rating) + (1 x harm) = Superior Score

Function B: (2 x average rating) + (1 x harm) = Average Score

Function C: (2 x harm rating) + (1 x superior) - (A x H) = Harm Score

These formulas generated a score of from 0 to 3 for each respondent on each item across the three types of categores.

For each of the categories--harm, average, and superior--we performed a principal factor analysis. This analysis was done for a three, four, five, six and finally a seven factor solution. In each case, the initial factor pattern was rotated using the varimax solution. Each of these analyses was then examined to see which solution produced clusters of items that made conceptual sense; that is, for which solutions did items hold together and be describable as a factor? The five factor superior solution was selected. This solution was then used for the remainder of our analyses.

11. Independent Variables

The following information was treated as independent variables, and these groups were compared on the five factor solution:

- o sex*
- o ethnicity*
- o type of problem deal with: personality v. environmental*
- o education*
- o type of knoweldge valued
- o provessional v. paraprofessional
- o times nominated by peers and supervisors
- o nominated v. not monimated*
- o experience as a human service provider*
- o experience with current employer*
- o experience in current job title*
- o perspective primarily administrative/supervisory v. primarily direct client contact*
- o administrators v. supervisors v. pure counselors*
- o helpers 1 v 2 v 3 v 4
- o administrators v. supervisors v. counselors v. helpers 1-4

Our operational definitions for administrators, supervisors, pure counselors and the four helper categories are as follows:

- o "Pure counselors" are people who have the perspective of working with clients (they checked work category #1 on page 1 of our questionnarie) and spend 50% or more of their time in direct contact with clients (n=225).

- o "Administrators" have the administrative perspective (they checked work category #2 on page of our questionnaire), spend 20% or more of their time on paperwork, are in direct contact with clients less than 5% of the time, and supervise less than 15% of the time (n=10).

- o "Supervisors" have the administrative perspective, supervise more than 50% of the time and have direct contact with clients less than 55 of the time (n=28).

- o Helpers 1-4 checked that their work is primarily administrative and

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* An item by item analysis was also conducted with asterisked categories as independent variables.

Helpers 1 are not pure counselors, not administrators and not supervisors (n=51)

Helpers 2 are Helpers 1 plus they spend 20% or more of their time doing community liaison work and 20% or more of their time locating resources (n=41)

Helpers 3 are Helpers 2 who spend 33% or less of their time in direct contact with clients (n=11)

Helpers 4 are Helpers 2 who spend 50% or more of their time on paperwork (n=15)

Regarding types of knowledge valued, open-ended questions on absolutely necessary (Question #16) and useful but not absolutely necessary knowledge (Question #17) were coded into three types and combinations of the three: (1) theoretical knowledge; (2) specialized or technical knowledge and skills; and (3) practical or experiential knowledge and skills.

12. Data Tapes and Codes

A laundered data tape was prepared for the National Institute of Education's Home, Community and Work unit and for the Syracuse University School of Social Work (to be used in student research projects). The tape contains the raw scores for each respondent and each client. The tape also contains the raw scores for each respondent transformed to a form suitable for factor analysis, the results of that factor analysis, and the program used for the transformation. The factor analysis consists of the five factor scores which were generated for each respondent using the five factor superior solution. A manual containing the necessary information about the format for the individual files and records is included with the data tape. The tape and manual contain all the information and data needed for further analysis or to compare this sample with relevant data from other projects. These comparisons could be made using both the raw data and the factor scores. Codes identifying agencies and departments are being held by the project director. We've noted only which data is

from public and which from private agencies.* Codes of individual's names will be destroyed upon completion of the final report, in keeping with confidentiality pledges.

* We wish to make the data useable by other researchers, but in accordance with explicit and implicit confidentiality arrangements, believe that written releases should be obtained from the agencies of interest and forwarded to the Project Director, Sheila Huff, McBer and Company, 137 Newbury Street, Boston, Massachusetts, 02116.

III

SURVEY FINDINGS

I. Background

The 120 items used for our surveys of human service workers providers and their clients were generated through three job elements workshops involving professionals, paraprofessionals and clients from 24 public and private human service agencies in Syracuse, New York. Descriptions of the participatns and procedures used in the workshops are contained in Section II. Since some of our readers may be interested in who contributed particular items, Table 1 in Appendix B contains this information. We hope readers will notice the importance of each group's contributions. The perspective on human service jobs of paraprofessionals and clients is often overlooked in deciding what qualities are important in hiring decisions, in designing education and training programs or performance evaluations. We hope the contributions to our study of these groups will encourage others to include their valuable perspectives.

A total of 502 questionnaires from human service providers were received and analyzed. An additional 20 arrived too late for inclusion. Table 2 in Appendix B gives a detailed breakdown of the characteristics of these respondents, using the 492 responses received in time for the analysis. Table 3 also lists the number of paraprofessionals and professionals responding from each of the 24 agencies.

Seventy percent of the respondents were professionals, and 30% were paraprofessionals. Twenty-eight percent of the respondents worked primarily in an administrative or supervisory capacity, and 69% worked primarily in direct assistance roles with clients. The average age of respondents was 35 years. One third of the respondents were male, and two-thirds were female, reflecting the population of male and female human service workers in these agencies. Ninety percent of the respondents were white, with the largest other percentage from minority

populations being blacks at 4.1%. Our data did not enable us to determine whether this percentage represented the actual percentage of direct or supervisory/administrative personnel in these agencies. The average number of years as a human service provider was 8; average years with current job title, 4; and average years with current employer, 5. The average level of education was the bachelor's degree.

Table 4 in Appendix B displays the background characteristics of the 51 clients who responded to our survey. They were primarily white females with children. All of the respondents resided in low-income neighborhoods. The extent of their exposure to the particular agencies in our sample is noted.

2. The Anatomy of Harm from Two Perspectives: Human Service Providers and their Clients

Our inquiry as to which deficiencies of human service workers would be most likely to result in harm to clients is an attempt to give meaning to the vague, abstract concept of "the public interest," which certification and merit systems are pledged to protect. We may also look upon our activities as an attempt to define one aspect of "minimum competence"--those characteristics or qualities of human service providers whose absence or deficiency could seriously jeopardize client welfare.

Working from raw percentage data, displayed in Table 5 of Appendix B, Figure 1 identifies those items for which 50% or more of the human service providers and 50% or more of the clients agreed that harm was likely to occur to clients were the attribute missing. Figure 2 identifies those items for which 50% or more of the human service providers thought harm was likely were the attribute missing but less than 50% of the clients concurred. Figure 3 identifies those items for which 50% or more of the clients thought was harm likely were the attribute missing, but less than 50% of the human service providers concurred.

To ease examination and discussion, we clustered the items in Figures 1-3. They can be roughly grouped as "interpersonal/affective," "interpersonal/cognitive," "cognitive," "affective," "problem-solving," and "health" competencies. While these divisions help make information more manageable, they certainly are not cut and dry categorizations.

FIGURE 1

Description: For the following items, 50% or more of the human service providers and 50% or more of the clients agreed that harm is likely to occur to clients were the attribute missing in a human service worker. (n=502 total sample of human service providers; n=51 clients.) Abbreviations: total sample of human service providers (t); clients (c)

Interpersonal/affective:

Item

8 Belief in the ability of people to change (t50%; c51%) (motive)

13 Ability to be satisfied with very slow or very limited progress of clients (t50%; c53%) (trait)

15 Sensitivity to clients' needs for privacy (t57%; c67%) (motive)

17 Concern or compassion for people needing social services (t57%; c65%) (motive)

38 Willingness to allow clients to share in decision-making (t53%; c51%) (skill, motive, self-schema)

44 Ability to balance sympathy with objectivity in helping clients (t55%; c59%) (skill, motive, self-schema)

53 Reliability/dependability (t53%; c61%) (trait)

59 Ability to see the cleint as an individual and not sterotype him or her (t67%; c69%) (knowledge, skill, motive)

60 Ability to be honest with clients without unnecessarily hurting their feelings or humiliating them (t63%; c73%) (skill, motive)

61 Carefulness in upholding confidentiality standards (t70%; c61%) (knowledge, motive)

76 Ability to control your behavior (t66%; c53%) (knowledge, skill, motive)

83 Ability to build a trust relationship with clients (t56%;c61%) (motive, skill, self-schema)

Item

84 Ability to help people whose life styles you do not like (t51%; c55%) (knowledge, motive)

102 Ability to relate to clients with special problems (for example, poor, handicapped, terminally ill) (t56%; c51%) (knowledge, skill, motive)

112 Respect for the human dignity of people needing social services (t75%; c59%) (knowledge, motivation)

116 Willingness to allow clients to be the kind of people they want to be and not impose your values on them (t63%; c55%) (motive)

77 Good judgment in determining a client's ability to understand, accept or digest information (t54%; c55%) (knowledge)

79 Ability to express your thoughts in words clients can understand (appropriate vocabulary) (t53%; c63%) (skill, motive)

Cognitive:

14 Ability to recognize when you don't really know enough about something to be able to help (t65%; c61%) (knowledge, self-schema)

20 A clear understanding of what authority you do and do not have in your role (t50%; c57%) (knowledge, self-schema)

22 Willingness to reassess judgments in light of new information (flexibility) (t59%; c53%) (skill, trait)

48 Open-mindedness (t54%; c53%) (skill, trait)

Problem-Solving:

4 Ability to determine which client goals are realistic (t51%; c55%) (knowledge, skill)

67 Ability to recognize a crisis situation (t73%; c51%) (knowledge)

Affective

85 Ability to keep cool in tense situations (t67%; c59%) (skill, trait)

104 Patience (t61%; c65%) (skill/trait)

FIGURE 2

Description: The following items are those for which 50% or more of the human service providers thought harm was likely to occur to clients if the attribute were missing but less than 50% of the clients concurred.

Interpersonal/Affective:

Item

41 Willingness and ability to help clients become more independent (t52%; c47%) (skill, motive)

97 Ability to control the degree of personal involvment with clients (t68%; c45%) (skill, motive)

Problem-Solving:

54 Good judgment as to when to act and when to refer something to co-workers or to higher authorities (t53%; c29%) (knowledge, self-schema)

Health:

103 Ability to look after your own physical and mental health needs (for example, through recreation and other sources of relaxation and enrichment) (t53%; c45%) (skill, motive)

105 Skill in assisting clients in understanding their problem (t46%; c61%) (skill, motive)

FIGURE 3

Description: The following items are those for which 50% or more of the clients thought harm was likely to occur to clients were the attribute missing but less than 50% of the human service providers concurred.

Interpersonal/Affective:

Item

63 Ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes and understand their attitudes and feelings (t46%; c67%) (knowledge, motive, self-schema)

69 Belief that the system can be made to work in meeting client needs (t33%; c51%) (knowledge, motive)

Cognitive/Interpersonal:

18 Skill at getting your point across verbally (t42%; c51%) (skill, motive)

23 Skill at getting information from clients (interviewing skills) (t46%; c53%) (skill, motive)

26 Ability to listen carefully to clients and make appropriate responses, including nonverbal ones (t49%; c61%) (knowledge, trait)

64 Ability to give clear instructions to clients in locating necessary documents, related services, etc. (t33%; c53%) (knowledge, motive)

89 Ability to assist in keeping communication channels open between your agency and the community (t28%; c51%) (knowledge, skill, motive)

Cognitive:

27 Ability to read and understand written instructions, regulations, forms, etc. (t34%; c55%) (skill)

30 Ability to maintain accurate records and files (t39%; c55%) (skill, motive)

31 Ability to understand why people behave the way they do (t48%; c55%) (knowledge, skill, motive)

47 Ability to answer routine questions about the service your agency provides (t23%; c57%) (knowledge)

49 Ability to analyze situations, ideas or behavior (t39%; c57%) (knowledge, skill, motive)

50 Ability to get support services for clients from outside your unit or agency (t42%; c57%) (knowledge, motive)

73 An accurate image of your own strengths and weaknesses (t43; c53%) (knowledge, self-schema)

88 Ability to identify the important or critical parts of client information (t47%; c57%) (knowledge, skill)

119 Clear understanding of your values (t33%; c53%) (knowledge, self-schema)

Affective:

56 Ability to cope with change (t39%; c55%) (skill-trait)

72 Initiative in taking action to get a job done (t28%; c51%) (knowledge, motivation)

87 Ability to function in situations that are not clearcut (34%; c51%) (Skill/Trait)

115 Belief that the service you are providing can help people (t46%; c51%) (knowledge, motive)

For example, the cognitive/affecive dichotomy always breaks down under close examination; there is a knowledge or skill component in affective competencies and vice versa.

In arraying the "harm likely" items, we have used the following schema adopted from our consultant at McBer and Company (Klemp, 1980) who defines competence as "a characteristic of an individual which underlies effective work performance." A competency can be any human quality:

- It can be knowledge, a category of usable information organized around a specific content area (for example, knowledge of mathematics);
- It can be a skill, an ability to demonstrate a set of behaviors or processes related to a performance goal (for example, logical thinking);
- It can be a trait, a consistent way of responding to an equivalent set of stimuli (for example, initiative);
- It can be part of one's self-schema, a person's image of self and his or her evaluation of that image (for example, self-image as a professional); or
- It can be a motive, a recurrent concern for a goal state or condition which drives, selects, and directs behavior of the individual (for example, the need for achievement).

In arraying the "harm likely" items, we have suggested the possible breakdown of these complex characteristics using the McBer schema. Our effort here is without the benefit of discussion and is where a cognitive psychologist, philosopher or educator might <u>begin</u>. Our suggestions of the breakdown are hypotheses which can serve as a starting point in designing appropriate learning experiences and assessments which promote and evaluate these complex characteristics. The simple categories we have used would need to be altered and expanded for greater precision.

In looking through the items in Figures 1-3, certain discrepancies merit comment. Clients in the workshop asked that we point out that there is a difference between "confidentiality" and "privacy." In Figure 1, it can be seen that there is general agreement between human service providers and clients that both are critical. However, human service providers tend to stress "confidentiality;" whereas clients

stress "privacy." One client gave a vivid account of the need for privacy which exemplifies the meaning they give to the concept:

> "This lady's a real 'pro' and wouldn't say anything about me to my neighbors or boss or anyone she knows. But she sits me down in this room with all these social workers and secretaries and maybe even other clients--I don't know--and talks real loud to me and asks me to talk louder too. And people started kind of looking. I was really embarassed." (She may not breach confidentiality standard , but she does not seem to respect the client's need for privacy.)

Moving to Figure 2, for Items 41 and 97, "helping clients to become more independent" and "controlling the degree of personal involvement," human service providers must always bear in mind the need to help people get on their feet and on their own, since there are always others needing their services. Clients, on the other hand, are less inclined to view the absence of these competencies as potentially harmful. Their absence might not harm them but, rather, others who need assistance.

A second significant discrepancy in Figure 2 is Item 54, "good judgment as to when to act and when to refer something to co-workers or to higher authorities." While 53% of the human service providers believed harm could occur were this quality missing, only 29% of the clients concurred. In a meeting with the staff of one of the large human service agencies, social workers suggested that clients lacked a perspective of the system, tending to think that all human service providers have similar kinds of knowledge and authority to help them; they are usually not aware of the amount of referrals that occur within agencies.

Moving to Figure 3, there are some significant discrepancies that comments in our workshop with clients elucidate. The first is Item 64, "the ability to give clear instructions to clients in locating necessary documents, related services, etc." The clients said that some human service providers do not understand how long it sometimes takes to get necessary documents. The clients, particularly the Hispanic clients, also pointed out that they often did not know how to or where

to get what was needed. Providing guidance is not something that is done routinely in all agencies. For some clients, it presents a major stumbling block that can delay assistance or discourage prospective clients. The survey data support the conclusion that human service providers are not very sensitive to this area of client need and potential harm.

With regard to Item 89, "keeping communiations channels open between the community and agency," clients understood the integral relationships among various problems in poor neighborhoods. They spoke in terms of "knowing what's going on, how people live, the kinds of problems they face, and the nice things too." They did not believe there was enough two-way communication between agencies and the communities they serve, particularly bottom-up communication. From the data, clients believe that the absence of the ability to keep the channels open can result in harm. Problems cannot be set in context, which increases the likelihood of misdiagnosis.

Understanding a person's milieu as a necessary condition for effective problem-solving is a central tenet of the emerging field of clinical sociology. It seems obvious that a good understanding of a person's environment will help in diagnosing and resolving client's problems, but such understanding is not common, particularly when the ethnic and socio-economic status of human service providers differs from that of their clients. And, as our data reveals, assisting in keeping communication channels open so that human service providers have the requisite perspective is not widely recognized as important to preventing harm. It is probably one of the competencies that is not given high priority until one experiences how much it can help in diagnosing a client's problem and in helping him or her solve it, or until one sees how much its absence can harm a particular client.

Although the discrepancy isn't quite as large as for Item 89, it is nevertheless significant for Item 63, "empathy" or "the ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes and understand their attitudes and feelings." Sixty-seven percent of the clients believe harm can occur in its absence, while only 46% of the human service providers concurred. The cognitive element in empathy ordinarily comes from familiarity

with the background of others. Direct contact with different environments is perhaps the best teacher for a reflective person--books and movies also having their place in promoting empathy. The motivational component is the willingness to try to take another's perspective and attempt to understand matters as they do (which is not necessarily to sympathize with their position). Having that motivation might well be contingent upon understanding that differences exist. Items 89 and 63, therefore, are quite closely related.

For Item 27, "ability to read and understand written instructions, regulations, forms, etc.," there is a significant discrepanacy, 34% of the human service providers and 55% of the clients believing harm is likely if this ability is missing. Quite simply, denials of service or delays in service can result from mistakes in this area. Clients are in a better position than human service providers to discover client problems stemming from deficiencies in this basic skill.

For Item 30, "ability to maintain accurate records and files, 39% of the human service providers and 55% of the clients believed harm could occur from lack of capability in this area. In the workshop, clients related stories of frustration and occasional harm at misplaced records and time-consuming efforts to reconstruct them. They pointed out that sloppy record keeping or inaccessibility of records wasted human service workers' as well as their own time and often led to costly delays in getting necessary services.

Item 47, "ability to answer routine questions about the service your agency provides," surfaced another significant discrepancy. The clients in the workshop or their friends and neighbors had, on occasion, been bounced from person to person in an agency until they gave up in frustration, consequently going without a much needed service. Clients noted that not all of the bouncing was the result of lack of knowledge of the services the agency provided. Much of it was due to an uncertainty as to their own authority to answer such questions. Human service providers are generally not aware of the people who give up. They are aware only of those who have been successful in locating theright person. The clients are therefore in a better position to judge the relative importance of this competency.

The discrepancy for Item 49, "ability to analyze situations, ideas or behaviors," with 39% of the human service providers and 57% of the clients believing harm is likely if this ability is absent, comes as somewhat of a surprise. We would have anticipated finding the reverse or concurrence. Perhaps the explanation is that clients live the consequences of misdiagnosis of their problems. Once off their "case," human service providers usually do not know what happens to the people they have attempted to assist. Developing analytical skills without the benefit of such feedback strikes us as somewhat problematical.

For Item 111 "a clear understanding of your values," there is a significant disagreement, 33% of the human service providers and 53% of the clients believing harm is likely in its absence. This is somewhat puzzling in light of the agreement (t63%; c55%) over Item 116, "willingness to allow clients to be the kind of people they want to be and not impose your values on them." Item 119 is the cognitive compoent of such restraint. If one does not know his or her values, how does one restrain from imposing them? Or, how does one identify alternatives that manifest others' values; namely a client's values? In connection with these items, it bears noting that the human service providers and clients did not conceive of self-destructive or anti-social ways of thinking or behaving as "values." Clearly, values' clarification that involves clients from a diversity of background and communities served by agencies would shed light on the specific values that client groups wish to have acknowledged. This would provide a contrast class, enabling human service workers to learn where their values diverge from those of client groups served.

For Item 56, "the ability to cope with change, there is a significant discrepancy, 39% of the human service providers and 55% of the clients believing harm can occur in the absence in the absence of this quality. Closely related is the discrepancy for Item 87, "the ability to function in situations that are not clearcut," 34% of the human service providers and 51% of the clients believing harm can occur if this ability is absent. The clients were most vocal on these qualities, stressing that human problems that bring people to agencies for help are usually complex; issues are not cut and dry; and human service

providers who cannot handle the ambiguity cannot help the client. Patience is also a factor in the ability to cope with ambiguity.

The human service providers were quite vocal in the discussion of the ability to cope with change. Rules and regulations, job circumstances, problems encountered all changed, and they themselves changed, as did their clients. Inability to cope with change was believed to loom large as a factor in burnout for some human service workers, which development leads to dropping out or "calcification." The ability to cope with ambiguity and change merit study in their own right, comparing the successful a d unsuccessful in these spheres to gain a deeper understanding of the competencies and to develop indicators to enable the identification of human service workers who would benefit from coaching for these skills. Sometimes simple encouragement and support and repeated statements to the effect: "You are going to make some mistakes. If you don't, you aren't thinking; you aren't working," can overcome the anxieties connected with an inability to cope with change and ambiguity. Mistakes can be made without sacrificing self-confidence. Sometimes, however, the fears of people are so ingrained that a reasonable measure of such encouragement is too little, too late, and the situation is impossible for for a co-worker or supervisor to turn around. We thus classified these two qualities as "skills/traits." It is one thing to help a human service worker develop a skill and another to change a trait that may have developed in childhood and which transfers to most aspects of life, not just a new wrinkle or unclear situation in one's job.

The last two discrepancies we will discuss are interconnected in some respects. For Item 69, "belief that the system can be made to work in meeting client needs," 33% of the human service providers and 51% of the clints believed that harm could occur were the qualities missing. For Item 72, "initiative in taking action to get a job done," 28% of the human service providers and 51% of the clients judged harm to be likely in the absence of this characteristic. Clients were quite vocal about the merits of taking initiative. They spoke of the harm that comes from a "that's not my job" or "wait, maybe the problem will go away or somebody else will take care of it" attitude. Needless to

say, if one does not see the potential in the system to respond, one will be disinclined to try to make anything but the routine happen.

Another way that psychologists have characterized initiative is a desire to achieve something, make something happen or do something better. In management, for example, "proactivity" or taking the initiative distinguishes superior from average managers (Boyatzis, 1980). As with many of the competencies, the harm that comes to clients in its absence is not directly inflicted. It is more a case of "missed opportunities" --delays in service or failure to assist.

In this discussion, we have drawn relationships among but a few of the competencies. There are many more that readers will need to consider in developing applications for the findings. Also, we took apart a few of the competencies, discussing some apects of their complexity. Developing specificity around the competencies, discovering their interrelationships, and developing criteria for assessing various levels of their attainment is an ideal of competency-based education, training and assessment; and, despite labels that might indicate otherwise, very few practitioners are very far along in the process (Huff et al., 1980). It is difficult work; but it has high pay-off in terms of building effective education and training programs and sound assessment systems.

3. Attributes Judged to be More Characteristic of Superior than of Average Performers

Again, working from the raw percentage data contained in Table 5 of Appendix B, Figure 4 lists the attributes which human service providers believed were more typical of superior than of average performers. Clients agreed on six of the attributes. Figure 5 lists the attributes which clients believed were more characteristic of superior than of average performers, and human service workers disagreed. Figures 6 and 7 display items where judgments of human service providers and clients were equally divided.

For the following items in Figure 4 judged to be more characteristic of superior than of average performers, 50% or more of the clients believed harm would occur were the attribute missing.

73 An accurate image of your own strengths and weaknesses.

87 Ability to function in situations that are not clearcut.

For the four following items from Figure 5 judged to be more characteristic of superior than of average performers, 50% or more of the clients and/or human service providers believed harm was likely were the attribute missing:

22 Willingness to reassess judgments in light of new information (flexibility).

26 Ability to listen carefully to clients and make appropriate responses, including nonverbal ones.

31 Ability to understand why people behave the way they do.

116 Willingness to allow clients to be the kind of people they want to be and not impose your values on them.

For the following items from Figure 7 where opinion was divided as to whether the attribute was characteristic of average or of superior performers, 50% or more of the human service providers and clients believed harm was likely were the attribute missing:

15. Sensitivity to clients' needs for privacy

60. Ability to be honest with clients without unnecessarily hurting their feelings or humiliating them

All of the above items are considered critical to client welfare but not judged to be characteristic of the average human service worker. In programs to upgrade skills and abilities, therefore, these items should be candidates for priority attention among the several abilities that distinguish outstanding from average performers.

With regard to the disagreements, the experts at knowing what hurts them are clients. On the other hand, because clients lack exposure to hidden aspects of the human service worker's job and the inner workings of agencies, we recommend placing less weight on client judgments of what characterizes superior performers than on the judgments of human service providers for Items 24, 43, 57, 62, 65, 96, and 106. However, items relating to the direct contact between human service providers

FIGURE 4

Description: The following items are those attributes which human service providers believed were more characteristic of superior than of average performers. (The asterisk denotes that clients concurred on the item. The absence of an asterisk means that clients disagreed, believing the characteristic more typical of average than of superior performers or their opinion was equally divided.)

Item	
2*	Ability to keep working towards goals in stressful situations
7*	Skill in motivating people to change
16	Skill in working with clients in groups (as opposed to one-on-one)
24	The ability to motivate co-workers
29	Willingness to take a critical look at agency rules in light of client needs
34	Imagination in thinking up solutions to problems
35	Ability to think fast on your feet
36*	Ability to identify hidden messages and clues in conversations and behavior
39*	Willingness to keep trying when goals are hard to reach (persistence)
43	Willingness to stand up for what you believe in (courage, assertiveness)
46*	Ability to see relationship among pieces of information and draw sound conclusions
57	Ability to handle many assignments at once
62	Ability to plan and coordinate the work of a team
65	Skillfulness in working around gaps or barriers in the service delivery system

Item	
66	Ability to use different strategies and examples to get your point across
73	An accurate image of your own strengths and weaknesses
87	Ability to function in situations that are not clearcut
91*	Willingness to take risks
96	Ability to informally teach co-workers
107	Ability to help co-workers develop self-confidence

FIGURE 5

Description: The following items are those attributes which clients believed more characteristic of superior than of average performers, and human service providers disagreed.

Item	
22	Willingness to reassess judgments in light of new information (flexibility)
26	Ability to listen carefully to clients and make appropriate responses, including nonverbal ones
31	Ability to understand why people behave the way they do
116	Willingness to allow clients to be the kind of people they want to be and not impose your values on them

FIGURE 6

Description: The following items are those where human service providers were equally divided in their judgment as to whether the characteristic typified average or superior performers.

Item	
109	Ability to apply theoretical knowledge in attempting to understand or solve a problem

and clients, negative experiences with some human service workers and positive experiences with others would have enabled clients to see distinctions in performance. Taking into account these differences of perspective on the items and limited opportunities of clents to compare human service workers, the discrepancies between the judgments of human service providers and clients on what dcistinguishes superior from average performers tend not to be all that significant.

4. Agency Feedback Reports

The above two analyses of harm likely and characteristics distinguishing superior from average performers were used to prepare special individual feedback reports for particpating agencies. For each item, the agency's average raw percentage score was juxtaposed to responses for the total sample. Caveats for the use of the information were provided, together with comments on significant departures of the agency's staff from the average for the entire sample. Also, percentages were circled for the total sample and each agency's sample, noting were 50% or more had agreed that harm was likely and also believed the characteristic more typical of superior than of average performers. We recommended special training efforts for these characteristics. On the other hand, we recommended more careful screening where it was thought that the attribute could not be successfully cultivated in a reasonable period of training.

All of the agencies were invited to discuss their report with our team. Two of them, Hutchings Psychiatric Center and Onondaga Department of Social Services, set up meetings so that their education and training department staff and other interested parties to review the reports with us. The Training Directors in these two agencies have begun to use the information in planning their training programs.

5. Irrelevant Items

Most of the Items were deemed relevant to on-line human service jobs. While not irrelevant for all jobs, some of the items were deemed irrelevant for some. Figure 8 lists the items and the percentage of human service providers who considered them irrelevant.

FIGURE 7

Description: The following items are those upon which clients were equally divided in their judgment as to whether the characteristics typified average or superior performers.

Item	
15	Sensitivity to clients' needs for privacy
60	Ability to be honest with clients without unnecessarily hurting their feelings or humiliating them

FIGURE 1

IRRELEVANT ITEMS

Item #		Percentage of Respondents Who Deemed Item Irrelevant %
3	Typing Skill	86
1	Ability to do financial management	44
33	Willingness to visit clients' homes	26
99	Basic spelling ability	26
62	Ability to plan and coordinate the work of a team	25
16	Skill in working with clients in groups (as opposed to one-on-one)	24
11	Ability to speak the everyday nglish and slang of major client groups served	22
110	First-hand knowledge of the neighborhoods of client groups served	21
94	Willingness to work overtime	17
93	Rewarded primarily by helping others	17
24	Ability to motivate co-workers	16
89	Ability to assist inm keeping communication channels open between your agency and the community	16
65	Skillfulness in working around gaps or barriers in the service delivery system	14
91	Willingness to take risks	14
100	Willingness to do the same detail over and over again	14

Item		
117	Knowledge of standard English grammar	13
107	Ability to help co-workers develop self-confidence	12
120	Willingness to work with families of clients served	12
50	Ability to get support services for clients from outside your unit or agency	10
32	Knowledge of federal and state programs available in the community	10

6. Five Dimensions of Human Service Competence

Through standard factor analysis procedures using the "Superior 5 Factor" solution, we identified the following five dimensions of competence in human service work that is centered upon direct contact with clients in a counseling or helping capacity:

1. DEVELOPING HELPING RELATIONSHIPS
2. CONFORMITY TO MINIMUM WORK STANDARDS
3. TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE KNOWLEDGE
4. DIAGNOSTIC AND PROBLEM-SOLVING ABILITY
5. HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT SKILLS

Figures 9-13 display the items loading most heavily on each of the five factors or dimensions. Scores of each respondent used in establishing the factors and used for all of our statistical analyses reflect a judgment as to whether or not the absence of the quality can cause harm and whether it is characteristic of superior or average performers. The highest score would occur if the rater believed that (a) harm to clients is likely if the quality is absent, and (b) only superior performers possess the quality. Both judgments taken together yield the assignment of importance for each item.

FIGURE 9

Description: Factor 1: DEVELOPING HELPING REALTIONSHIPS (0.50+ cutoff) Harm likely ratings of human service providers (t) and clients (c) appear in parentheses after each item.

Item	Loading	
83	.63	Ability to build a trust relationship with clients (t56%; c61%)
60	.59	Ability to be honest with clients without unnecessarily hurting their feelings or humiliating them (t63%; c73%)
59	.57	Ability to see the client as an individual and not stereotype him or her (t67%; c69%)
112	.57	Respect for the human dignity of people needing social services (t75%; c59%)
116*	.55	Willingness to allow clients to be the kind of people they want to be and not impose your values on them (t63%; c55%)
63	.54	Ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes and understand their attitudes and feelings (t46$; c67%)
104	.54	Patience (t61%; c65%)
105	.53	Skill in assisting clients in understanding their problems (t46%; c61%)
48	.50	Open-mindedness (t54%; c53%)
79	.50	Ability to express your thoughts in words clients can understand (appropriate vocabulary) (t53%; c63%)

*Clients judged this item to be more typical of superior than of average performers.

FIGURE 10

Description: Factor 2: CONFORMITY TO MINIMUM WORK STANDARDS (0.50+ cutoff) Harm likely ratings of human service providers (t) and clients (c) appear in parentheses after each item.

Item	Loading	
51	.69	Personal cleanliness (t24%; c33%)
68	.65	Neatness in dress and appearance (t13%; c25%)
47	.62	Ability to answer routine questions about the service your agency provides (t23%; c57%)
27	.58	Ability to read and understand written instructions, regulations, forms, etc. (t34%; c55%)
113	.58	Ability to take orders and follow procedures (t39%; c43%)
55	.56	Willingness to cooperate with others on the job
117	.55	Knowledge of standard English grammar (t15%; c43%)
74	.54	Willingness to accept supervision (t40%; c41%)
6	.51	A pleasant disposition (t29%; c45%)

FIGURE 11

Description: Factor 3 - TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE KNOWLEDGE (0.45+ cutoff) Harm likely ratings of human service providers (t) and clients (c) appear in parentheses after each item.

Item	Loading	
32	.54	Knowledge of federal and state programs available in the community (t28%; c49%)
50	.51	Ability to get support services for clients from outside your unit or agency (t42%; c57%)
106	.51	Willingness to be an advocate for clients (t35%; c39%)
108	.50	Knowledge of the governmental and agency regulations governing your job (t33%; c45%)
89	.48	Ability to assist in keeping communication channels open between your agency and the community (t28%; c 51%)
78	.47	Knowledged in a special area relating to your work (t20%; c37%)
1	.46	Ability to do financial management (t13%; c41%)
64	.45	Ability to give clear instructions to clients in locating necessary documents, related services, etc. (t33%; c53%)

FIGURE 12

Description: Factor 4: DIAGNOSTIC AND PROBLEM-SOLVING ABILITY (0.50+ cutoff) Harm likely ratings of human service providers (t) and clients (c) appear in parentheses after each item.

Item	Loading	
22*	.58	Willingness to reassess judgments in light of new information (flexibility) (t59%; c53%)
31*	.58	Ability to understand why people behave the way they do (t48%; c55%)
49	.58	Ability to analyze situations, ideas or behavior (t39%; c57%)
25	.57	Ability to interpret nonverbal behavior (t39%; c43%)
4	.55	Ability to determine which client goals are realistic (t51%; c55%)
36***	.55	Ability to identify hidden messages and clues in conversations and behavior (t38%; c49%)
2***	.53	Ability to keep working towards goals in stressful situations (t46%; c49%)
26*	.53	Ability to listen carefully to clients and make appropriate responses, including nonverbal ones (t49%; c61%)
39***	.53	Willingness to keep trying when goals are hard to reach (persistence) (t36%; c45%)
44	.53	Ability to balance sympathy with objectivity in helping clients (t55%; c59%)
7***	.52	Skill in motivating people to change (t29%; c41%)

Item	Loading	
13	.50	Ability to be satisfied with slow or very limited progress of clients (t50%; c53%)
35**	.50	Ability to think fast on your feet (t36%; c31%)

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* Clients judged this item to be more typical of superior than of average performers.

** Human service providers judged this item to be more typical of superior than of average performers.

*** Clients and human service providers agreed that this item was more typical of superior than of average performers.

FIGURE 13

Description: Factor 5: HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT SKILLS (0.40+ cutoff) Harm likely ratings of human service providers (t) and clients (c) appear in parentheses after each item.

Item	Loading	
91***	.50	Willingness to take risks (t22%; c24%)
107**	.50	Ability to help co-workers develop self-confidence (t16%; c39%)
75	.46	Knowledge of what you need to remain healthy and productive (t25%; c37%)
96**	.45	Ability to informally teach co-workers (t12%; c27%)
72	.44	Initiative in taking action to get a job done (t28%; c51%)
73**	.44	An accurate image of your own strengths and weaknesses (t43%; c53%)
103	.44	Ability to look after your own physical and mental health needs (e.g., through recreation and other sources of relaxation and enrichment) (t53%; c45%)
119	.44	Clear understanding of your values (t33%; c53%)
24**	.43	Ability to motivate co-workers (t14%; c29%)
98	.43	Willingness to give up a case when necessary (t46%; c33%)
87**	.42	Ability to function in situations that are not clear-cut (t24%; c51%)

Item	Loading	
92	.40	Self-esteem (liking yourself) (t40%; c39%)
45	.40	Ability to gain the cooperation of co-workers (t30%; c35%)

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* Clients judged these characteristics to be more typical of superior than of average performers.

** Human service providers judged these characteristics to be more typical of superior than of average performers.

*** Clients and human service providers agreed that this item was more typical of superior than of average performers.

Factor 1: DEVELOPING HELPING RELATIONSHIPS

This factor is made up primarily of attitudes and skills that flow from them. The ability to build trust is the sine qua non of helping, the agar or gell that enables disclosure and receptivity to others. For some, trust is quickly given if the right cues are present, or if there is an absence of negative cues. For others, considerable time may be required. In criminal justice, for example, we were told that six months to a year are the norm for an effective parole officer to establish a climate of trust with a client.

Other aspects of dynamic helping relationships which facilitate the development of trust are fundamental attitudes of open-mindedness, recognition and tolerance of human diversity, and that age-old virtue of respect for human dignity, which anyone who has been shamed deeply appreciates. Maria Montessori, the great Italian teacher and social worker, placed respect for human dignity above all other principles in her philosophy of education.

Closely allied with the above attitudes is the ability to empathize, to catch a glimpse of the world from the perspective of the client--what it looks like and how it feels. Empathy is the connector of individuals, a special kind of knowing or understanding that renders people's stories meaningful. When we have empathy, we can find some of ourselves in others. A helping relationship between total strangers is an impossibility. Empathy transforms a stranger into a person. Moreover, the greater our familiarity with diverse personalities and environments different from our own, the greater the scope of our potential for empathy. Such familiarity, provides opportunities for us to compare and discover similarities and differences so that when we encounter people who are not, on the surface, like ourselves, we aren't captured by the differences but, rather, can see or rest assured that similarities exist. We know, then, something about what we might expect from that person. This encourages the risk of relationship and gives it somewhere to begin.

Empathy and respect undergird the skills of finding the appropriate vocabulary for communicating with clients; knowing how to construct

explanantions they will grasp; and knowing how to convey interpretations or insights so that people stretch and grow as opposed to being diminished by humility--an underrating of one's self and one's potential.

There is, then, patience. People change slowly, as do circumstances affecting their lives. Often, in fact, the problems with which human service workers wrestle are never clearly resolved, thus explaining the need to be able to cope with ambiguity. To keep going, to remain effective, a human service worker may have to be satisfied with very small gains. The ability to do so was pointed out as especially important in mental health work. It was noted as a brand of patience on the front-lines in the war against burn-out.

Factor 2: CONFORMITY TO MINIMUM WORK STANDARDS

The items in this cluster involve features of socialization for most jobs that involve public contact. They are minimum competencies surrounding personal appearance, basic communications skills of reading comprehension and standard English grammar, and interpersonal skills needed for job survival such as a pleasant disposition and the ability to take orders and follow procedures, accept supervision and cooperate with others on the job.

While, as we will discuss later, the factor was not viewed, overall, as central in preventing harm, from comments of clients in our workshops (borne out by their surveys), two of the items were considered very important to their welfare. These are "the ability to answer routine questions about the service your agency provides" and "the ability to read and understand written instructions, regulations, forms, etc." Timely intervention requires that anyone who answers telephones in human service agencies be able to answer basic questions or know who can. One transfer of a call is not a "run-around." Three or four is discouraging; and more requires the strongest determination--more than prospective clients can sometimes muster in times of trouble.

For that aspect of their role which requires relating to the public, to prospective clients, the competencies of clerical staff of agencies overlap with human service workers on this factor. While for most

agencies we did not include clerical support staff in the sample, we did include some telephone operators from Hutchings Psychiatric Center who dealt almost exclusively with initial referrals and whose competence was noted as critical in connecting people in trouble with those who could help.

Factor 3: Technical and Administrative Knowledge

"Willingness to be an advocate for clients" may be a clue to a central motivator for acquiring and using the areas of knowledge and skills relevant to human service work listed in Factor 3. "Client advocacy" appears to be another way of talking about proactivity or initiative on behalf of one's clients. "Proactivity" occurs when a human service worker sees a problem developing or a possible opportunity and moves quickly to pursue it, not waiting until it is obvious that action is required. Psychologists who have studied "proactivity" name it as a central feature of achievement motivation--achievement motivation being the strong desire to do something better (McClelland, 19). People who are high in achievement motivation master knowledge as it is required to improve their performance.

Most kinds of relevant knowledge cited are typically acquired on the job, such as knowledge of federal and state programs available in the community; knowledge of rules and regulations governing one's job; and the knowledge that enables one to locate supoort services from outside one's unit or agency, to act as a liaison between the community and agency, and to instruct clients in locating necessary information and services. Depending upon the complexity of the financial management, given basic computational skills, details of budgeting and handling financial matters may also be readily acquired on the job.

Whether the ability to handle finances was viewed as relevant or irrelevant to human service work was, for the most part, a function of agency size and structure. In large agencies, many human service workers do not become involved in agency or department budgets. On the other hand, as pointed out by staff of the YMCA, in small agencies each human service worker is usually in charge of a program and must manage

a budget. Fund raising abilities, including influence skills in vying for scarce resources, may also come into play for these jobs.

With respect to knowledge in a special area relating to one's work, we asked respondents to note the kinds of knowledge they found essential to their jobs and the kinds of knowledge they found useful but not critical. Answers ranged across various kinds of theoretical, specialized technical and experiential knowledge and combinations of the three. Theoretical knowledge usually requires considerable time to acquire and a break from the immediate press of job demands. For this reason, bringing people to functional levels of theoretical ability is usually undertaken by faculty in colleges and universities.

Most of the specialized/technical knowledge mentioned had to do with building one's repertoire of diagnostic and problem-solving techniques. Although we did not ask respondents where they were acquired, in conversations with training staff of the large agencies, human service workers acquire much of their specialized knowledge and skills through in-service workshops provided by staff of the agencies, consultants, or college faculty. Where local colleges and universities offered appropriate instruction, Hutchings Psychiatric Center was exchanging supervised practicums for courses at local colleges for their agency's staff. The experiential knowledged mentioned by human service providers was that which is acquired through observing and reflecting upon one's experiences, things such as knowledge of other cultures, empathic knowledge from "having been there" oneself, "street smarts," and remembering what it feels like to be an adolescent.

It is in pinpointing the precise kinds and levels of knowledge and technical skills required for each job that our approach, "job element analysis," is inadequate. Task analyses and structured interviews conducted within each agency and feedback from program evaluations lend themselves more readily to capturing these details.

Factor 4: Diagnostic and Problem-Solving Ability

Whereas Factor 1 emphasizes interpersonal aspects of helping or counseling, Factor 4 emphasizes the more cognitive features. Leading

the list is skill in analyzing ideas, situations and behavior. Aspects of this skill identified by respondents include cognitive flexibility in processing information, the ability to interpret nonverbal behavior, and the ability to identify hidden messages and clues in conversations and behavior. Also, to keep information flowing, there is the skill of active listening, a large part of which involves encouraging the speaker through appropriate verbal and nonverbal responses.

Moving into problem-solving, the skill stressed by respondents is the ability to determine which client goals are realistic. Knowledge of human behavior and other kinds of knowledge cited in Factor 3 come into complex interaction as the human service worker calculates what is feasible--the clients potential for action or change as well as the environment's potential for support.

Counseling or helping relationships occur over several months or, in some cases, years; and the goal is to help people change.* This requires skill in motivating people to want to change and to keep up the struggle. Sympathy and objectivity must be kept in balance; and persistence and fortitude, sometimes in highly stressful situations, are required on the part of the helper as well as the client. A person who must see immediate clear gains and quick progress is usually ineffective or burns out quickly in such roles. In observations of mental health workers who spend their time in the community coaching people making the transition from institutional life to the mainstream, Dr. Jonathan Freedman of Hutchings Psychiatric Center likewise noted "being satisfied with slow or limited progress of clients" as typical of successful workers and it's converse as "a fast track to burnout." The importance of this ability probably gives counselors who have transcended addictions somewhat of an advantage in their work. They know how hard it is to overcome an addiction, they expect some backsliding and they know how long breaking the habit can take. Such

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* In community mental health, there may be an emphasis on helping clients change through organized efforts to improve community social institutions that influence their behavior. This orientation may call for some competencies not included in our survey.

first-hand knowledge undoubtedly reinforces patience and certainly expands one's potential for empathy.

There is, then, the ability to think fast on one's feet. The discussions at the workshop included acting fast on one's feet. Almost every human service worker encounters crisis situations where there is a premium on quick, effective intervention. Seeing this happen, the observer might say: "good instincts; good intuitive sense of what to do." Yet it is a skill much like playing the piano well. It comes from keen observation of behavior, understanding causal chains or what may happen next, knowledge of what works to change the course of events and, in traumatic situations, the courage to act decisively and responsibly.

Factor 5: Human Resource Development Skills

Devising an appropriate label for this factor was difficult. The choice was made to call it "human resource development skills," since many of the items appeared to characterize human resource consultants, an emerging role in industry. Most often such consultants emerge from the ranks in organizations and are viewed as leaders with exceptional interpersonal skills. They take on the specialized role of helping workers upgrade their skills and helping managers improve their interpersonal skills and the climate of their organizations. While the human service agencies in our sample had no such designated roles, several of the functions were taken on by some of the human service workers. Jumping ahead somewhat, human service workers who were nominated as outstanding in helping clients did not disagree significantly with others on any of the factors except this one. Outstanding human service workers, ascribed much greater importance to Factor 5 than others in the sample.

Showing up at the top of the list for Factor 5 is "willingness to take risks." In studies of achievement motivation, taking moderate risks is characteristic of high achievers. Moderate risks stetch the capabilities of the performer, but are viewed by him or her as feasible--the same kind of calculations occuring as those performed by

human service workers in determining how realistic certain goals are for clients (McClelland,). "Initiative in taking action to get a job done" is another aspect of achievement motivation.

In interaction with co-workers, helping them grow and develop, several skills come into play. Skill in motivating people to change that is applied in helping clients can also be applied to co-workers. Coaching or informal teaching occurs. Feedback in such activities can help others build self-confidence; and self-confidence enables people to take risks, to take risks that stretch their capabilities, to try hard. People wl > are effective coaches, able to help co-workers grow and develop confidence in themselves, have an edge when they need to gain their cooperation to get a job done. Such skills produce a multiplier effect, expanding an agency's capabilities to effectively serve clients.

Self-schema is a central feature of this factor: self-esteem; a clear understanding of your values; an accurate image of your own strengths and weaknesses; and knowledge of what you need to remain healthy and productive. These characteristics undoubtedly combine to allow a human service worker to relinquish a case when necessary. From the discussions in the workshops, "hanging in there until the bitter end" was not necessarily thought to be a virtue. It is sometimes necessary to admit that you are not making progress and to refer a client to someone better qualified to meet their particular needs. This requires self-esteem and an accurate self-image.

The ability to function in situations that are not clear-cut, to cope with ambiguity, is also be a function of self-esteem and confidence. People with this characteristic are not unduly afraid of making mistakes and are not inclined to freeze when they aren't sure if they are proceeding in the right direction. They do not need to be told exactly what to do before taking action to correct a problem or seize an opportunity.

Last but not least is the ability to look after your own physical and mental health needs. You not only know what you need, but you do what you have to do to assure good health. Not all human service workers run down or burn out. Some maintain high levels of energy,

growing increasingly effective over the years and remaining satisfied with their jobs. Given the stress inherent in their work, and given the lack of organizational supports to combat burn-out, these human service workers may be viewed as "superkids" and studied in their settings in the hopes of developing innoculants for their less gifted peers.

Figure 14 displays the number of items per factor judged to be critical to preventing harm and the number of items per factor judged to be more characteristic of superior than of average performers. Responses of human service providers (HSPs) and clients are reported separately.

Although for all factors, some items were judged by clients to be critical to their welfare, they rank Factor 1, "Developing Helping Relationships," and Factor 4: "Diagnostic and Problem-Solving Ability" highest, as do human service providers. Table 6 in Appendix B displays the average ratings on each factor's potential for preventing harm.

In terms of which factors loom largest in superior performance, human service providers judged these to be Factor 4: "Diagnostic and Problem-Solving Ability," and Factor 5: Human Resource Development Skills." Clients concurred on Factor 4, but not on Factor 5. As discussed previously, we would tend todisregard the lack of concurrence on Factor 5, since understanding it requires knowledge of human service workers operating behind the scenes--an opportunity clients do not have.

8. Significant Disagreements on Factors

In reading this section, it should be borne in mind that there was overall agreement that all five factors are important in human service work, that Factors 1 and 4 are critical to preventing harm to clients and that Factors 4 and 5 are more typical of superior than of average performers. This section disaggregates the sample to discuss statistically significant disagreement ($p < .05$) in relative weight assigned to the factors among various classifications of respondents.

Those who seek to anchor education and assessment to the demands of practice sometimes turn to the field for information about the nature of jobs. They may engage in informal conversations with members of the human servicecommunity, they may put together panels of "experts," or

FIGURE 10

Description: Relative weighting of factors by clients and human service providers (HSPs) with respect to preventing harm and the contribution of the factor to superior performance.

	Number of Items per Factor Judged to be Critical to Preventing Harm		Number of Items per Factor Judged to be More Typical of Superior than of Average Performers	
Factor	HSPs	Clients	HSPs	Clients
1	8 of 10	10 of 10	0 items	1 of 10
2	0 items	2 of 10	0 items	0 items
3	0 items	3 of 8	0 items	0 items
4	4 of 13	7 of 13	5 of 13	7 of 13
5	1 of 13	4 of 13	6 of 13	1 of 13

they may conduct surveys or interviews. We therefore believed it important to ask whether or not there were any statistically significant disagreements that might need to be taken into account by practitioners and that might suggest avenues for further inquiry to researchers. We conducted the following statistical comparisons on each factor. Definitions for these categories are given in Section II.

- o Sex: males v. female
- o Ethnicity: Indian v. Black v. Hispanic v. Oriental v. White v. other
- o Ethnicity: Black v. White
- o Role: Work Category #1 (supervisory/administrative primarily) v. Work Category #2 (direct consulting/helping primarily)
- o Role: Helpers 1 v. 2 v. 3 v. 4
- o Nominated v. not nominated
- o Role: Administrators v. Supervisors v. Pure Counselors
- o Role: Paraprofessionals v. Professionals
- o Type of problems dealt with: Personality v. Environmental
- o Years as Human Service Provider: 1 or less v. 2-3 v. 4-5 v. 6-10 v. 11-15 v. 16 or more
- o Years in Current Job Title: 1 or less v. 2-3 v. 4-5 v. 6-10 v. 11-15 v. 16 or more
- o Years with Current Employers: 1 or less v. 2-3 v. 4-5 v. 6-10 v. 11-15 v. 16 or more
- o Level of Education: Less than high school v. high school diploma v. some college v. associates degree v. bachelors degree v. some graduate work v. masters degree v. Ph.D. v. other
- o Type of Knowledge Valued: Theoretical v. technical/ specialialized professional v. experiential

In addition to the above analysis, we also developed a correlation matrix running all background variables against one another to locate

statistically significant correlations (r 0.15). These variables were also run against the factor ratings. Together, these analyses contribute to the task of interpreting the results.

Factor #1 - Developing Helping Relationships:

According to our analysis of harm likely ratings, Factor #1 ranked highest in terms of the likelihood of harm to clients were qualities making up the factor lacking: 58.4% of the clients believed harm was likely were the qualities absent, and 62% of the human service providers believed harm was likely were the qualities missing. However, this factor is not one found to distinguish superior from average performers; but, rather, is a factor thought characteristic of average performers or one necessary for minimally acceptable performance on the job. Significant disagreements on this factor were as follows:

- o In contrasting the views of those whose work is primarily supervisory or administrative to those whose work primarily involves direct on-line work with clients in a counseling or helping capacity, on-line workers assigned significantly greater importance to the factor.
- o In contrasting the views of supervisors, administrators and "pure counselors," the counselors assigned significantly greater importance to the factor than did administrators and supervisors.
- o In examining experience as an independent variable, we learned that the more experience one had, the less highly he/she rated this factor;
  - In terms of years of experience as a human service provider, the factor was rated most highly by those with two or three years of experience and lowest by those with more than ten years experience as a human service provider.
  - In terms of years with current employer, the factor was rated most highly by those who had worked one year or less for their current employer and was rated lowest by those who had worked six years or more for their current employer.
  - In terms of years with current job title, the factor was rated most highly by those who had their titles one to three years and lowest by those who had their current four years or more.
- o In examining level of education, this factor was rated most highly by those with a high school education or less and lowest by those with Ph.D.'s.

In addition, from the correlation matrix we discovered the following statistically significant relationships:

- o The more education one has, the less likely one is to work primarily with clients and the less time spent in direct contact with clients.

What may be seen as accounting for the above facts is that the further away one is from the job itself and what it demands, the less likely one is to recognize the relative importance of competencies involved in developing helping relationships.

Factor #2 - Conformity to Minimum Work Standards:

According to our analysis of harm likely ratings, Factor 2 ranked alongside Factor 5 as least problematic in terms of harm likely to clients, although the average rating for clients was 43.2, as opposed to 28.1 for human service providers. The factor was also judged to be part of minimum job performance. Significant disagreements were was follows:

- o In terms of ethnicity, Hispanics rated the factor highest; Whites rated it lowest.
- o Paraprofessionals rated the factor highest; professionals rated it lowest.
- o Those with less than a high school education rated the factor highest. Those with a college or graduate education rated it lowest.
- o Those who cited some kind of experiential knowledge (as opposed to theoretical or technical/specialized progessional knowledge) as critical in terms of doing their job rated this factor most highly. It was rated lowest by those who cited theoretical knowledge as critical.

Paraprofessionals come from less advantaged backgrounds than professionals in the human service agencies in our sample. Like the clients, paraprofessionals attach greater importance to minimum standards for acceptable service. They are also late arrivals to socialization into the norms of agency life. Their schooling has usually not coached them on what to expect. An analogous situation would exist for an American transplated for the first time in a foreign country with no preparation.

Survival and acceptance demands that learning the language, the customs, manners and dress codes become a primary focus of attention and energy for several years. The paraprofessionals were service providers who underlined the importance of Item 111, "the ability to work effectively with co-workers who come from different backgrounds." The item washed out in the factor analysis, the majority, the professionals, the more priveleged agency personnel who set the pace, did not see the quality as challenging.

Factor #3 - Technical and Administrative Knowledge:

Factor 3 ranks third highest in terms of harm likely ratings--47.9% of the clients believing harm is likely if the qualities are missing, and 30.3% of the human service providers believing harm is likely if the qualities are absent. This factor was judged to be part of minimum job performance. Significant disagreements were as follows:

- o Professionals rated this factor more highly than paraprofessionals.
- o This factor received the lowest rating from those who cited some kind of technical/specialized professional knowledge (as opposed to theoretical or experiential knowledge) as critical to their ability to do their job.

From the correlation matrix, we discovered the following statistically significant relationships:

- o Human service providers whose work is primarily administrative or supervisory and who spend more time on paper-work than others value this factor more highly.
- o On-line human service providers who spend more time in locating related services for cleints than others value this factor more highly.

Assigning greater importance to this factor is undoubtedly a function of the tasks one is called upon to perform--the amount of intake, referrals and community liaison one does. Paraprofessionals usually work directly with clients once their entitlement to service and the kind of service to be provided have been established. For example, paraprofessionals spend most of their time in direct contact with clients on the wards in mental hospitals. They go out and take

over household responsibilities when unfortuitous circumstances remove parents temporarily from a home. They go into homes and teach women about child care and nutrition. They organize and lead ball games and group activities for children needing adult attention. It would appear that they and their professional co-workers with similar duties would have a greater need for specialized knowledge about the problems common to the people they are assisting than for the other kinds of knowledge dominant in this factor.

Factor #4: Diagnostic and Problem-Solving Ability:

This factor was found to distinguish superior from average performers. The factor ranked second highest in terms of the likelihood of harm were qualities making up the factor absent. The average rating of items on the factor in terms of harm likely was 44.2% for human service providers and 50.1% for clients. Significant disagreement was as follows:

- o Level of education produced significant disagreement on this factor. Those with less than a high school education rated it lowest. Those with a bachelors degree or graduate studies rated it highest, with the exception of those whose highest degree was a masters. Their rating of the factor was below the mean.

In addition, from the correlation matrix, we discovered the following statistically significant relationship:

- o There was a significant positive correlation between dealing with literacy problems and valuing this factor.

Because individuals with a masters degree stood out from others with a comparable amount of education, we analyzed the majors of those whose highest degree was the masters (n = 135). For the 109 respondents from this group who specified their majors, the breakdown was as follows:

Master of Social Work	49%
(Various Counseling)	11%

Counseling & Guidance (Education)	9%
Education	8%
Various Other	12%
Academic Disciplines	11%

Most of the disagreement, then, is accounted for by those majoring in social work, education and various types of counseling. The pattern of responses shows that these individuals tend to assign less importance to diagnositc and problem-solving abilities than others with comparable amourcs of education. Interpreting this finding requires caution. One possible explanation is that, as in the case of Factor 2, (conformity to minimum work standards), diagnosis and problem-solving skills have been more thoroughly internalized by people with education and social work/counseling backgrounds such that they tend to assign them less importance. This explanation is discredited, however, by the fact that others with equal experience should have agreed, and they did not. A more plausible explanation is that these individuals have fewer diagnostic and problem-solving skills and less tendency to view them as important. Since such as finding would have important implications for education, and because we cannot determine from our data what precisely explains the discrepancy, we recommend further research to determine whether there is a problem and, if so, its particular parameters.

The fact that those working with literacy problems stand out in the importance they assign to this factor is not surpising. The field of reading has widely publicized the fact that there are diagnostic techniques for pinpointing the precise nature of reading problems. Knowing exactly what the nature of the difficulty is that a person is having can greatly increase the efficiency of teaching and learning. Other problem areas human service workers deal with have less clear-cut definitions of problems and less specific criteria for diagnosis and treatment.

Factor #5 - Human Resource Development Skills

Although ranked lowest in terms of likelihood of harm to clients were

the qualities absent, 31.2% being the average rating of human service providers and 39.7% being the average rating by clients, this factor distinguishes superior from average performers. Significant disagreement was as follows:

- o This was the only factor where there was significant disagreement between those nominated by their peers and supervisors as outstanding and those who were not so nominated. Those nominated as outstanding assigned significantly greater importance to this factor than those not nominated.
- o Professionals assigned significantly greater importance to this factor than did paraprofessionals.
- o This factor was rated most highly by those with masters degrees and graduate studies.
- o Type of knowledge cited as critical to performance correlated with value attached to this factor. The factor was rated least highly by those who cited kinds of theoretical knowledge as critical to their jobs.

In addition, from the correlation matrix, we discovered the following statistically significant relationships:

- o Human service providers who worked with groups value this factor significantly more highly than others.
- o Human service providers who work primarily with clients and who also spent considerable time on community liaison work value this factor significantly more highly than others.
- o The more time spent on paperwork, the less one tended to value this factor.

The theme of developing self and others, with leadership overtones, stands out in examining the items on this factor. The negative correlation with paperwork and valuing theoretical knowledge, and the positive correlation with group and community liaison work suggest the hypothesis that basic motivational differences and correlative work style preferences underlie the assignment of relative importance or unimportance to this factor. While this factor may be critical to achieving excellence in any on-line role, its practicality in group and community liaison work is apparent. It may be the case that those who have or are working to develop these kinds of competencies tend to gravitate towards roles where their exercise is recognized, legitimized and rewarded.

The significant undervaluing of the factor by paraprofessionals may be explained by their novice standing in human service work. They value conformity to minimum work standards significantly more highly than others probably because they are working to acquire these minimal competencies. As they grow in their jobs, one would expect their ranking of the importance of Factor 5 to be elevated as their ranking of the importance of Factor 2 diminishes.

It should also be noted that master's degree holders, who assigned significantly less importance to diagnostic and problem-solving ability, assign significantly greater importance to human resource development skills. The emphases in their formal education programs may well account for both phenomena.

Comments:

The precise nature of disagreements is interesting. Why the disagreement? What explains it? We hve been able to offer only our best estimates on the matter. We leave to others the task of refinement and the job of using the information we've provided in dealing with practical problems. We wish, however, to emphasize the implications of our study for what psychometricians refer to as "content validity"--does a test adequately sample the real content of a job, the really important elements of a job? It sounds simple enough. One looks at a job and figures out what people need to do it competently. Or one asks the people in the job and people who have considerable opportunity to observe people in the job to say what is important, as we did. Opinions differ, as we have demonstrated; and that they differ can be explained by many of the factors we pinpointed. Moreover, differences can be fairly stable and therefore predictable. Distance from the job may explain certain emphases. Level of education may explain others. Identification with the clients served may yet explain others. Ordinarily the question is not raised of who decides what elements of a job are important. "Content validity is content validity," period. We hope we have demonstrated that it does make a difference who is asked and that it is helpful for those involved in selection and training to be able to work from a pluralistic account, weighing and balancing the needs of clients, human

service providers, and human service systems when deciding what to emphasize. All the competencies human service providers and clients suggested are undoubtedly important, but scarce resources dictate that certain of them be given prioritiy. We hope we have given information valuable to those who may attempt to make their delivery systems more client-centered, more attuned to the needs of human service providers, yet cognizant of system needs. Striking a reasonable balance requires considerable dedication and effort. We hope we have demonstrated the need for such an attempt.

APPLICATIONS

A. INTRODUCTION

The major purpose of our study was to provide useful information to educators about the generic competencies involved in human service work. The need for this information was most apparent among educators who were attempting to construct competency-based programs. There was little, if any, systematically collected data on jobs in human service work to aid them in making choices among the myriad of competencies that might be required. Ordinarily, broad goals or institutional mission statements which take into account institutional resources and faculty interests drive the scope of course offerings. In the case of education for occupations such as human service work, faculty often operate on a vision of excellence and professionalism in the field. To supplement their experience and to assist them in clarifying objectives for student learning, we offer a view of competencies which represent the judgments of agency personnel and their clients--those people closest to the jobs in question.

Although the need for the information provided through this study was voiced by competency-based programs, it has potential applicability to more traditional programs as well. The project was also geared to providing useful information to state agencies who license or certify individuals in human service positions or who design civil service entrance requirements. Last but not least, we envisioned many possible applications in human service agencies.

This section attempts to begin bridging the gap between research and application by suggesting some of the ways practitioners and researchers might use and build upon our study. Some of the suggested applications are highly ambitious, while others represent more moderate challenges.

B. EDUCATIONAL APPLICATIONS

Curriculum Design

The most ambitious and costly use for the information provided in this report would be to put it to work, in conjuction with information from other sources, in the construction of a competency-based program in the human services. To illustrate the level of effort involved in such an undertaking, we list some of the major factors to be taken into account in designing a competency-based program:

-Institutional Goals and Objectives for Student earning
-Curriculum
-Institutional Environment
-Pedagogical Techniques
-Assessment of Student Learning
-Exit Standards
-Student Advising
-Staff and Student Orientation
-Staff Recruitment Criteria
-Staff Development Programs
-Staff Evaluation Criteria
-Incentive Structure
-Organizational Structure
-Bac Up Services
-Rules and Procedures
-Admissions Criteria and Procedures
-Record Keeping
-Fees; Revenues; Budget Procedures
-Program Evaluation Criteria
-Accreditation Standing
-Mesh with Certification & Licensing Requirements
-Market Characteristics
-Faculty and Staff Relations
-Relation to Parents of Students
-Relations with State Departments of Education
-Institutional Research and Information Acquisition

All of these factors must be examined to determine whether changes are indicated when major shifts in program goals occur. Retrofitting traditional programs can be very costly. Starting from scratch lowers costs and greatly increases the likelihood of success in implementing a competency-based program.

In this section, we focus on setting program objectives, noting additional resources for guidance on other factors involved in building competency-based programs.

Steps in arriving at Education Program Objectives

Table outlines major steps to be take in arriving at educational program objectives. These, in turn, serve as the foundation for an educational plan that assigns areas of responsibility to faculty and staff. They also provide the basis for setting individual objectives for courses and other directed educational experiences.

Step 1: The first step involves information gathering. A starting point for an already established program would be to consider their mission and adopt a process for developing a list of broad program goals. Such things as the duration of the program and the particular kinds of jobs for which they are preparing students would be included in the overall goals.

Once program directions are clarified, institutions can begin collecting information from other sources to supplement the job analysis provided from our survey. We have focused on the generic competency requirements of human service jobs. Information on the actual tasks carried out in these jobs would provide a useful supplement for identifying specific knowledge and skill requirements of jobs. For an exhaustive task analysis of the job of paraprofessional mental health worker, for example, we refer readers to work of the National Center for the Study of Professions (

being carried out in conjunction with the Southern Regional Education Board to develop a certification system in this area.

Generally, education and training directors of local agencies have access to task analyses they or governmental civil service offices have conducted on jobs in their agencies. Job element analysis (our approach in this report) and task analyses are not particularly useful for determining the precise nature of theoretical and specialized knowledge that prove most critical or useful to human service workers--an important concern for educators. Here we would recommend surveying human service workers in the jobs for which you are preparing students, asking them what theoretical and specialized knowledge they find critical to effectiveness and what theoretical and specialized knowledge they find useful but not critical to effective performance. This initial weighting will prove useful later in setting priorities among program objectives.

We also recommend checking forthcoming journals in the field and asking agencies whether any critical incident studies have been conducted of outstanding human service workers. Such studies provide a rich source of data for verifying competency requirements of jobs and seeing what they look like in action; i.e., what specifically do people with these competencies do, say, think and feel? In the behavioral sciences, such specifics are called "behavioral indicators." It is difficult to design highly effective learning experiences and sound assessments in the absence of such case study data (see Flanagan, 1954 and McBer and Company under "Resources).

Generally, the more lenses through which to view the job, the more sound one's choice of objectives will be. Ideally, educators constructing a competency-based curriculum would have at their disposal information from critical incident studies, task analyses, job element analyses, surveys on theoretical and specialized knowledge requirements of jobs and observation data. In the real work, such luxuries do not exist. Nevertheless, information can be accumulated as a program grows and can be used to refine objectives and assessments of student learning. A practical suggestion, where critical incident studies are not available and budget constraints preclude hiring professional consultants to conduct and analyze interviews would be to recommend such studies as student projects. For students undecided on a career in the human services, conducting focused interviews would be a useful way of familiarizing themselves with jobs. Moreover, they would have acquired some level of skill in conducting interviews--a skill useful in many fields of endeavor. We recommend that the interviews be taped and transcribed then analyzed by faculty or staff who have well developed conceptual skills in seeing patterns and trends in qualitative data.

In sorting and choosing program objectives, it is important to ask which competencies would best be left to on-the-job training or casual learning on the job. Making such a decision would require consideration of the kinds of learning opportunities that are generally available in agencies which hire the majority of the program's graduates. Ordinarily, many of the human service workers' minimum competencies are acquired on the job, such as the facts of life of particular agencies;

the organizational structure; the governmental rules and regulations the agency operates under; the specific governmental and agency rules and regulations that govern the particular job; the constellation of related services available in the community and how to gain access to them; the specific conditions affecting particular client groups the agency serves. These are but a few possibilities of knowledge readily acquired on the job. Local collaboration between campus curriculum designers and training staff in agencies for which the program acts as a feeder institution could establish an accurate basis for one cut at the division of labor between preparatory programs and on-the-job learning. The goal of such collaboration would be to preserve academic time for critical competencies not readily develop through agency training programs or in the course of doing one's job.

Another necessary type of information to be gathered relates to the knowledge, skills, interests and values of faculty and staff. From the experience of other programs that have been successful in carrying out major institutional change, it is recommended that processes be used that pass possible choices of objectives through the filter of faculty and staff judgment. The "not created here" syndrome can undermine the best, most carefully derived set of program objectives. Moreover, ideal visions of the profession may call for the addition of certain objectives for competencies not currently present among outstanding human service workers, or may call for the downplaying of others that are. Our sample, for example, was primarily of workers in agencies delivering services in a very traditional manner. As new approaches to service delivery emerge, they may call for competencies beyond those uncovered through current job analyses. Here educators, as always, have the opportunity to change the shape of a profession through changing the competencies of their graduates. The strongest programs, those most likely to sustain the support of faculty and students, have a well formulated philosophy of education that incorporates ideals for a profession, education goals based on knowledge of the competencies required for superior job performance, and sound principles of pedagogy for fostering their development.

Step 2: The second step would be to clarify the overarching program goals in light of the information from Step 1. Statements of mission or purpose and goals often change as a result of introducing new information and giving faculty and staff an opportunity to reflect upon and discuss it.

Step 3: The third step involves spinning out the full range of objectives from which to choose a focus. Given a specific program's duration and level using information from Step 1, it is necessary to decide which objec.ives to adopt and which to leave to in-service training, casual learning on the job, to a higher level of pre-service training or to continuing education. Also, a decision is required as to what competencies, in addition to those derived from job analyses, are required to: (a) change the shape of practice, if so desired; (b) ease the transition from education to work, and (c) maximize the potential for growth on the job. For example, preparatory programs could teach students information gathering skills which could help them to quickly master new work environments and the kinds of information required for particular jobs they might occupy. Looking at a specific possibility, our research showed that paraprofessionals spend significantly more time than their higher ranking associates communicating with the community and locating related services for clients. This suggests that skills for gathering and organizing information for easy access or recall would be appropriate objectives for associate degree or certificate programs for paraprofessionals. Other skills that maximize the potential for learning from experience might also be considered. Recognizing the importance of "learning to learn from experience," staff of Alverno College have begun groundbreaking research to pinpoint what such competencies entail.

Step 4: The fourth step involves weighing the objectives and making trade-offs. In arriving at some finite set of objectives, trade-offs have to be made based on several considerations. First, it is necessary to consider the importance of the various clusters of competencies to preventing harm to clients and their contribution to superior performance.

mance. Factor 1, Developing Helping Relationships, and Factor 4, Diagnostic and Problem-solving Ability, were those deemed most central to client welfare. Factor 1 was considered a minimal competency cluster; whereas Factor 4, which distinguished the superior from the average performers, is an optimal competency. Were educators to emphasize these two competency clusters, they would be minimizing the likelihood that their students would cause harm to clients while, at the same time, aiming for excellence in their graduates' performance.

A second basis for making trade-offs is the values and ideals of the institution and faculty. The market for a program's graduates enters into such decisions, as must knowledge of the characteristics of the student body. For example, radical reform programs may hold no appeal for the students normally attracted to a particular college or university. On the other hand, a "mainstream" approach may lack appeal to other demographic groups of students. Arriving at compromises on the diversity of faculty ideals can be one of the most difficult steps in changing a traditional program to one that is competency-based, particulary when individual faculty may have become accustomed to a high degree of freedom in determing their educational goals.

A third set of decisions involves estimating whether or not, given the resources available and the duration of the program, a particular competency can be developed to a sufficient level. Here the issue of admissions requirements comes into play. Some of the competencies amount to traits developed from childhood. Taking a person with antithetical traits and turning them around may be an impossibility given program constraints. In such cases, recruiting for the competency makes sense. It should be noted, however, that for some competencies that take years to develop, giving a person a "good start" and equipping them with information on how to develop them further through other experiences may be feasible.

Other trade-offs will surely be involved in arriving at an appropriate set of objectives. We are not trying to be exhaustive here, but merely wish to suggest some major elements to be considered in arriving at such a decision.

Once overall program objectives have been developed, the task of planning and implementing a program begins. There is a growing body of

experience to guide educators in the processes of building sound competency-based systems. Interested readers are referred to a recent report to the National Institute of Education on "The Definition and Measurement of Competence in Higher Education", (

The report includes descriptions of six competency-based postsecondary programs, including the programs of the College for Human Services in New York City, which has been highly innovative in designing learning experiences that unify theory, practice and evaluation, and Alverno College, which has established levels of developmental competencies and innovative assessment system for assuring their development. All of the programs included in the report have engaged in ground-breaking work, and the experiences of their staff are an invaluable guide to others who would attempt to design new approaches to curriculum design that tie learning experiences and assessments to critical job competencies. The Resources Section at the end of the report, following the References, lists several helpful publications. The Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education in the U.S. Department of Education is also an important source of information on competecy-based programs.

Strengthening Traditional Programs

Most institutions will not be in a position to undertake the thorough-going change that competency-based education entails. However, a glance back at the Five Factors, [illegible] comparing them with the offerings of a traditional curriculum, reveals a large discrepancy. The emphasis from the job analysis is strongly upon skills, attitudes, traits and other behavioral dimensions, while the emphasis of traditional programs is upon theoretical and specialized knowledge. The discrepancy suggests a need for a better balance. Carefully structured, directed practicums where students recieve detailed feedback hold considerable potential. Changing the modes of instruction from "lectures only" to include more opportunities to apply concepts and theories to problems, to practice skills and receive feedback is another option. The following sections contain other applications which could expand the resources an institution can bring to bear in promoting in its students the development of competencies central to human service work.

Human Service Work Learning Resources Directory

Competencies from our model could be used as the basis for constructing regional learning resource directories where learning opportunities are indexed to the competencies. Agencies seeking volunteers or student/workers, educational institutions, employers training programs and other community organizations that would provide opportunities to enhance the competencies could specify the kinds of experiences available, keying them to the competencies. The idea of educational brokering is gaining currency, and a resource directory is basic to such programs. For example, the External Diploma Program of New York State is competency-based and has no instructional component. The pilot project, designed and administered by staff of the Regional Learning Service of Syracuse, New York, assesses candidates, and where deficiencis exist, they are referred to appropriate learning experiences listed in the community resource directory that the Regional Learning Service staff has compiled.

Such directories would expand the resources of preparatory programs, continuing education programs and agency training capabilities. Cooperative exchanges could be arranged. For example, Hutchings Psychiatric Center (Syracuse, New York) provides supervised practicums to college students in exchange for college credit hours for agency staff. The directories would also provide a valuable resource for faculty advisors in directing students to suitable practicums.

Student Assessment

Learning objectives which are not assessed to ascertain whether they are being attained tend to disappear from faculty agendas. Also, when students receive little or no feedback on their progress toward acquiring particular competencies, their learning pace is slowed; or they may lose interest entirely. For this reason, taking any of the competencies we have identified seriously as learning objectives of programs would require an expanded perspective on assessment. Many of the competencies are long-term in their development. Responsibility for their cultivation might be shared among many faculty members over a series of courses and learning experiences such as practicums. Moreover, many of the competencies do not lend themselves to demonstration

through paper-and-pencil tests or the traditional modes of assessment in higher education. To deal with similar situations, some institutions have developed assessments at the institutional level to complement more traditional mdes of assessment in courses

For example, Alverno College has pioneered in assessment system design (Alverno College Faculty). They have adapted some techniques used for performance assessment from industry such as the use of jury panels, and have trained faculty to improve inter-rater reliability. They have also searched broadly to discover operant, performance-based measures appropriate for the competencies they wish to promote, creating new measures where necessary. Alverno staff are also conducting validity studies to determine whether their measures discriminate between average and superior performers (concurrent validity), and they hope eventually to study whether students who perform well on their measures go on to become outstanding practitioners (predictive validity).

Although the supply of sound performance-based measures is quite limited, steps are being taken to assure that they are accessible to educators and that experience with these measures is shared. The Center for Applied Performance Testing of the Farwest Regional Education Laboratory and the Cooperative Assessment of Experiential Learning (CAEL) project are invaluable resources providing guidance to educators interested in developing new approaches to assessment.

Student Self-Assessment/Guidance

A faculty member from a human service program in Eugene, Oregon suggested an application for our competency model. Using items from our questionnaire, he planned to design a self-assessment instrument for students which would ask such questions as: (1) whether they had the competency or not, (2) whether they believed it needed further development, and (3) which of the competencies they either lacked or felt needed further development they wished to attain. He intended to use the instrument as a guidance tool in supervising practicums. A regional resource directory or even a directory of the college's learning opportunities keyed to the competencies would make such a self-assessment guide of even greater benefit to students.

The value of practicums can be very limited when neither students nor supervisors have a clear understanding of what the students are expected to gain from the experience. Students often do not even know what kinds of feedback to ask for, and the supervisors do not know what aspects of students' work to analyze and critically evaluate. In addition to learning less than what is possible and desirable, there is also the danger that without adequate feedback, students will become discouraged. When students understand that most competencies are long-term developmental and that certain experiences will merely inch them along to their mastery, they are more inclined to be patient with themselves and their supervisors. Likewise, when teachers and supervisors share this kind of understanding, they can be more patient with the learner and more able to act as effective coaches. Our competency model could be used as the basis for learning contracts between students, agency supervisors and faculty advisers to enhance the educational value of practicums.

Resource Pooling

The approach we took to developing a competency model for human service work led to the identification of generic as opposed to specific competencies of jobs. Our work complements task analyses of particular jobs which yield specific knowledge and skills required for performance. Also, we could have structured our survey to cover but one domain of human service work but chose, instead, to ask whether there were competencies that cut across the many branches of human service work. The competencies in our model do cross-cut a broad range of jobs. This suggests that there could be special workshops or programs cooperatively designed by colleges in a region (or agencies) that pull students (or workers) from ordinarily isolated programs. Such efforts could provide efficiencies of scale making them affordable. Moreover, in human service work, most environmental factors contribute to an emphasis upon the differences among practitioners in various branches of service and even among subspecialty areas within an agency. Emphasis is put on what differentiates these areas rather than what unites them. More numerous educational experiences that bring students and workers together from diverse areas could help balance

such perceptions. This, in turn, could have payoffs in service to clients with multiple problems and in the mobility of human service workers across domains as the needs of populations served shift or as certain labor markets become saturated.

Program Evaluation

Where programs are competency-based and there are carefully specified goals for student learning, assessment of student progress is a valuable tool in program evaluation. Even where goals are vaguely stated, such as "cognitive development" in liberal arts programs, students can be assessed along certain cognitive dimensions when they enter and leave programs to determine whether they have progressed. If gains can be attributed to the program, such assessments provide a valuable resource for program diagnosis or justification that indicate where change may be needed. Our competency model can be used as a benchmark to help programs clarify their achievements. Which competencies do their programs enhance? Where do they differ in their objectives? With what rationale? Such a clarification process, which makes norms of operation explicit, can be a first step in the change process; or where change is not desired, it can promote a new sense of identity and purpose which can lead to increased energy for program activities.

C. LICENSING AND CERTIFICATION APPLICATIONS

In some states, some of the positions covered in our survey require licenses for practice. Also, there are several professional organizations that certify members who have met their standards. Specific requirements are as diverse as the number of agencies and organizations engaged in certification functions, but they ordinarily involve certain educational background requirements and often some kind of examination. A recent report points out that such requirements are rarely tied to known requirements for competent work performance. Most tests in use look only for specialized knowledge in the field--our Item #78 under Factor 3. A very small component of a human

service workers' competence is being tapped by such tests, and in many cases it is not at all clear that the tests look for important, relevant knowledge. Validations of the content of tests used to license or certify individuals has simply not occurred.
There is the possibility, then, that the tests both ask for too much or the wrong kind of knowledge, while ignoring other factors of equal or greater importance for assuring minimal competence.

In light of equal employment opportunity laws, it is important that specific jobs be examined to learn the kinds and levels of knowledge required so that tests in use that emphasize knowledge components of competence are indeed related to performance. On the other hand, moving licensure and certification yet further, more in the direction of protecting the public from harm, would require major rsources to create new assessment systems that tap a broader range of competencies central to client welfare and acceptable levels of performance.

D. CIVIL SERVICE APPLICATION

Civil Service examinations often duplicate the problems of licensing and certification examinations. While some efforts are being made to base these examinations on job analyses, there appears to be a large slip between the process of ascertaining the competency requirements of jobs and the actual construction of assessments. The usual procedure is to jump from a panel that lists job elements or tasks to item writing for paper and pencil tests. One problem stems from using paper and pencil tests and "knowledge" items to tap inappropriate domains. For example, "the ability to build trust relationships" is a complex one and it is difficult to conceive of factual knowledge items that could begin to ascertain the presence or absence of that ability. Another problem exists in generating esoteric items in an otherwise relevant domain such as "specialized knowledge in a technical area." Another, and perhaps the most serious problem to be surmounted in civil service examinations, is the so-called "Rule of Three" where only candidates in the three highest scoring groups are eligible for consideration for hire

in competitive civil service positions. There is no reason to expect that the higher one's score on a content oriented civil service test, the greater one's potential for competent performance. All that can be said is that some level of knowledge in one's field is necessary. Establishing the requisite levels of knowledge would require separate studies of average and superior workers in particular jobs. Moreover, it is entirely possible that individuals who have put practically all of their energies into subject matter mastery may tend to undervalue and neglect to develop other vital components of competence. We recommend, therefore, that cutoffs be established based on studies of average and superior performers and that all who have attained adequate levels of knowledge in a field be eligible to apply for positions governed by the civil service. Again, it is important to point out that such tests are, at best, screening out people who lack the requisite basic knowledge in the field. They are not selecting for competence. Ideally, civil service examinations would tap relevant domains of competence, and measures in use would have established predictive accuracy. Until tests with predictive accuracy are developed and used by the civil service, rank order on scores on tests with no established statistical validity simply operate to bar many potentially competent individuals from jobs. Minorities are particularly hard hit by such procedures.

E. CONCLUSION

We have suggested several possible applications of our research, some of which have already gotten underway in Syracuse, New York where the study was conducted. We also strongly encourage other researchers and students to expand upon what we have begun. To that end, a data tape and manual has been filed with the Home, Community and Work Division of the National Institute of Education.

In closing, we wish to thank the human service workers and clients whose cooperation made this study possible and enjoyable.